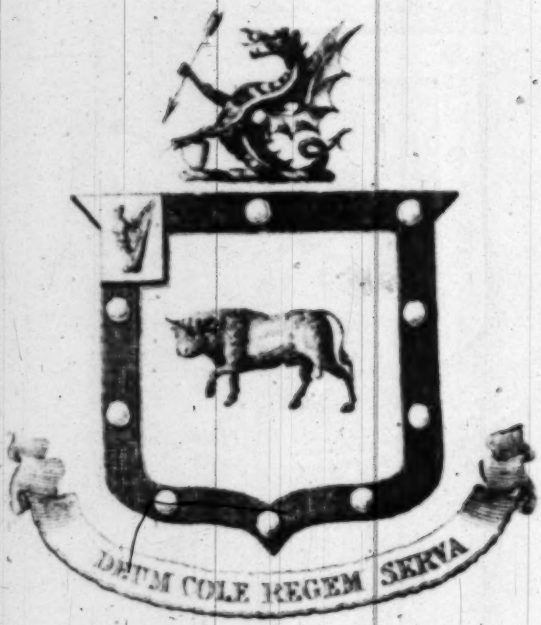
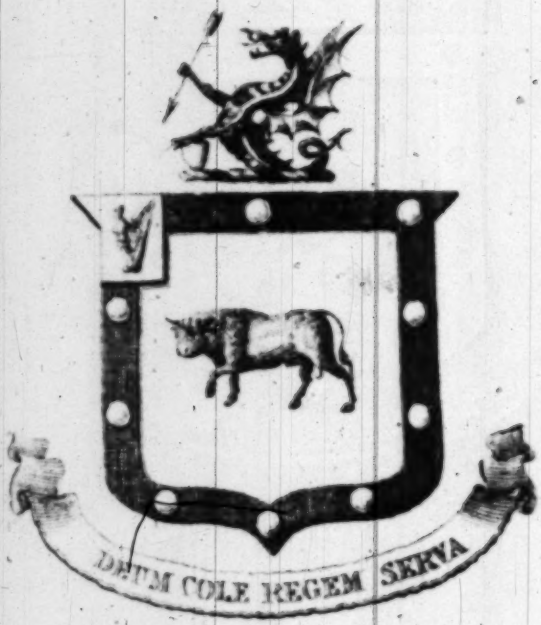


John William Cole.

1850.



John William Cole.

1850.

PLAYES
Confuted in fiue Actions,

Proouing that they are not to be ſuffred in a Chriſtian common weale, by the waye both the Cauils of Thomas Lodge, *and the* Play of Playes, *written in their defence, and other obiections of Players frendes, are truely ſet downe and directlye aunſwered.*

By Steph. Goſſon, Stud. Oxon.

S. Cyprian.
Non diſerta, ſed fortia.

LONDON
Imprinted for *Thomas Goſſon* dwelling in Pater noſter row at the ſigne of the Sunne.

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To the Right Honorable Sir Frances Wallingham Knight, one of the principall Secretaries to her excellent Maiestie, of her highnesse most honorable Priuy Counsell, & Chauncellor of the order,

Stephen Gosson wisheth prosperitie in this life, and life euerlasting in Christ our Sauiour.

IT is reported (Right Honourable) of *Callicratides*, that being appointed by the *Lacedemonians* to succeede *Lysander* as Admirall of their Fleete, the *Athenians* sente out aboue .. hundred & fiftie Shippes .. gainst him: whereupon the Maste

Maſter of his Shippe perſua-
dinge him to retire without
offeringe hys enemies anye
play, becauſe he was to deale
with the greater number; he
anſwered, that *Sparta* wold
be neuer the woorſe though
hee were foylde, but to flie,
was in hys iudgemente, the
greateſt reproch of all. So fa-
reth it this preſent time with
me, which giuing forth my
Defiaunce vnto Playes, am
mightily beſet with heapes
of aduerſaries, yet ſuch is the
Maieſtie of the Cauſe, that,
though all the pride of mine
enemies, and pompe of A-
thens be ſhipt to meete mee,

it

it will ſtand vpright, when I with *Callicratides* am ouerthrowne, but to ſhrinke in ſo good a quarrell, is in my opinion, more foule a diſgrace then death it ſelfe. God knoweth I neuer vndertoke thys troubleſome peece of woorke for any vaine glorie as *Craſſus* did his *Inuectiue* againſte *Carbo*, and repented him afterwardes, becauſe it was a hatchet to hys owne libertie, ſetting many mens eyes awworke to watch hym; nor of any fantaſticall ouerhardineſſe, as he that hauing taken a Wolfe by the eare, neither letteth hym goe, for

being

being aſſaulted, nor is able to maſter hym for wante of mighte: But as the Wraſtler entring the liſte, firſt taſteth his ſtrength, by lifting ſome churliſh peece of vveight at the armes end, & therevvith as it vvere rebateth hys ſtomacke, for being too rough vvhen he comes to grapple; I firſt vveighed in my hands the aunciente Fathers of the Church, that the maſsineſſe of theyr argumentes in thys matter might cauſe me not to deale ſo ouerthvvartlye & ſtubbornelye, as the Defendantes of Players haue deſerued. Neuertheles I thought

it

it neceſſarye to nettle one of their Orators aboue the reſt, not of any ſet purpoſe to deface hym, becauſe hee hath dealt very groſſely, homely, and vncharitably vvith me, but like a good Surgeon to cut, & to ſeare, vvhen the place requireth, for his ovvn amendment. Which thinge I truſt ſhall neither diſpleaſe your honor, nor any of the godly, in the reading, ſo lōg as the perſon vvhom I touch is (as I heare by hys ovvne frendes, to hys repentance if he can perceiue it) hunted by the heauy hand of God, and become little better than a va-

vagarant, looſer than liberty, lighter than vanitie it ſelfe. The righte, for the recouery vvherof I framed these actions belongeth not to mee, but vnto God, vvhose manner is to beate dovvne the loftineſſe of vsurpers, not vvyth the vviſdome of the world, or with preparation of ſpeare & ſhield, but with the fooliſhnes of the Goſpel, and the nakedneſſe of hys truth. Therefore it had bene as daungerous for me, in this ſimple Confutation of our Comedies, to play with my penne by ſeekinge fine pouders for deintie noſes, as it is for

for the ſoldier to dally with his weapon when the battell ioynes. It is one thing to flouriſh, an other to fighte, one thing to bragge, another to come to handye gripes. Finding Playes of theſelues, as filthy as the ſtables of *Augia*, impoſsible to bee cleanſed before they be carried out of Englande, wyth a ſtiffe ſtreame, and the baniſhinge of them as worthy to be regiſtred in the labors of *Hercules* as the conqueringe the monſtruous wilde Bore, of *Erymanthus*, that waſted the countrey round about: If euer ſo notable a thinge bee

brought

brought to paſſe it muſt bee done by ſome *Hercules* in the Court, whom the roare of the enimy cã neuer daunt. Whiche perſwaded mee amongeſt all the patrones of vertue in her Maieſties court to dedicate both this & my ſelfe vnto your honor, that your wiſedome might be a countenaunce to my ſtudy, your authoritie a buckler vnto my life. *Agamemnon* a valiaunt Captayne of the *Greekes*, thought verely, that if hee might haue but tenne ſuche as *Neſtor* to take hys part, it would be no trouble to ſacke *Troy*: I haue beene al-

alwaies of this opinion, that if but one ſuche as *Neſtor*, that is, your honor, doe no more then thruſte out your hand to ſuccour mee, let the wicked diſcharge their ſhot at my face, Playes will bee eaſely fired out: and I when I ſleepe ſhall be as ſafe, as the childe in his cradle, whoſe mother will not ſuffer a flye to bite him. Meane while I moſt humbly craue pardon for my bouldneſſe, in preſuming to crepe into your honours patronage: I make as much accounte of your honour, as the *Atheniens* did of *Paralus* their holye ſhippe,

that was neuer lanched but vpon high, & great affaires: The Gentlemen Players in the citie of *London*, are growen in ſuch a heate, that by their foming, their fretting, their ſtampinge, my frendes do perceiue how their harts woorke, and enforce me to bring to your honor no cõmon fraighte, but as much as my life and ſecuritie hereafter ſhall be woorth. If the prouidence of God, who many times ſcourgeth a mã with the ſinne that he loued, haue ordeined those players whome I fed with fancies, to be a whippe to my back,

and

and a dagger to my breſt, the fault is mine owne, the puniſhmente due: But if it be the pleasure of the Almightie, rather in mercy to deliuer, then in iuſtice to confound; & by your honorable patronage to snatch mee out of the iawes of those rauenous wolues, that haue whetted their teeth to pull me downe; I ſhall learne to employ my ſtudy to the glory of God, and be bound to your honour vvhileſt I liue. Thus vviſhing a charitable minde to them, better succeſſe vnto my ſelfe, plentye of happines to your honor;

I leaue them and me to your honors consideration, and your honor to the tuition of God himselfe.

To the Right worshipful Gentlemen and students, of both Vniuersities, and the Innes of Court.

NOthinge (Gentlemen) I perceiue to be inuincible in ꝑ world, both whiche, to my griefe, are quite against me, *Fauour*, & *Eloquence*: the one in Players, and that I feare: the other in you, and that peradnēture wil stay my passag. I mistrust that the fauour, which Players haue gotte with the greater multitude, will make them preiudiciall to the cause I handle, for loue is so blinde, that it neuer seeȝ any blemishe in the thing it liketh, but aȝ iuy, euen by the smallest, and weakest proppes that it catcheth, findeth a way to reare it selfe.

The eloquence that is in you, as I confesse it to be great, so were it not greatly to be doubted, if it were but indifferent in my selfe. Nowe sith my Rhetorike is litle, my Eloquence nothing, compared to you, whose continuall exercise, is ioyned to continuall studye: though the trueth be as sure on my side, as the succession of night is to the day, yet I holde my selfe vanquisht before you strike.

One beeing asked of *Archidamus* the king of *Sparta*, whether he, or *Pericles* were the better wrastler, answered, that he coulde not tell: for, when I throw him (quoth he) he denies he was downe, and persuadeth the beholders to beleeue him: Such is the excellencie of your witte, if it be bent to contende with me for Playes, that how-

soeuer

soener I trip you, or fetche you ouer, you are able to say that I come not neere you, and make the Reader auouch it, againste the open testimony of his eyes. I woulde Readers considered y when they come to the viewe of any newe booke, they are bidde by their frend as ghestes to a banquet: at a banket if any dish bee before you, which your stomacke abhors, It is a pointe of good maners, somewhat orderly to remoue it: In bokes if any thing bee offred that you cannot relish, curtesy wils you, with a thankefull kinde of modestie to refuse it. Our fathers forefathers in older time, were wont to place *Mercurie* in their Temples amonge the Graces, whose meaninge was, that as *Mercurie* was counted the God of vtterance: and the three Gra-

ces, the Ladies of Curtesy: so placinge the shrines of them together, might teachvs to know that speech is desirous of frendlye eares, and writers haue great need of Gentle Readers. When Gentlemen reade with a minde to barke, their thotes are so narrow that nothing will downe: whatsoeuer we speake is too rounde or too flatte, too blunte or too sharpe, too square or too crooked, one waye or other it standes awry. The fayrest citie in the worlde may bee ouerthrowen, with lesse charge, lesse labor, lesse time, than it can bee builte: a wracke is sooner spiede than drawne together: bookes many times are speedily reprehended, but amended by leisure, at the Calendes of the *Greekes*. It is the propertie of some kinde of Dogges, to teare

the

the skinne of the beast with wõderfull stomacke, when it is deade and within the doores, which abroad they neuer durst open at, when it liued: and diuers iollie sifters in these dayes can tosse, and turne, and within their owne walles make dishe-cloutes of writers, whose sight would be too hot for their presence if they might ioyne. Seeinge many bookes printed & few liked, I coniecture with my selfe that the reason is, that some ar curious, some froward, some idle. We know that counsell is as necessarie to our eares as light to our eies, the one is a lanterne to the bodie, the other a bright shining lampe vnto the soule. Receauing instruction, if your tooth bee too white, you may chaunce to sterue: if your nose be so fine that nothing will

please

please you, but that whiche is sweete, you may well be cõpared to those nice kind of Dames which in platting of Garlands forget their thrifte, or to him whiche thinkes it impossible to quenche his thirst, if his drinke be not serude in a cup of golde: if you be contentious and ouerthwart, willinger to cauil, than to learne: contented to reade, but not to regard: to be taught, but not reformed: you are like vnto him that forsakes the Phisitian when he is cutte, and neuer permits him to finish the cure: if you be so slow, of your selues, that because writers many times doe not set downe euery thing that may be spokẽ, but onely pointe with their fingers to the place, where you may bee satisfied if you seeke it, you will not trauell and study to

fish

fish it out, you are not much vnlike to naked birdes in the nest that euer lie yauning at the bill of ỹ dam, a search for no more then is put in their mouths. You know it is a notable point of folly for a man to toaste himselfe by his neighbours fire, and neuer bestirre him to keepe any warmthe in his owne chimnie: as great a madnes is it in manye Readers, when they are taught, not seeke to mainetaine it of their owne: whiche is, to contente themselues with the glorious blase of an other mãs knowledge, whereby they outwardly get some colour in their cheekes, but within they are duskie, darke and obscure. Many thinges might bee spoken against Playes, for the vaine ostentation of a flourishinge wit, brauelie, for satisfieng thẽ that

are

are vnsatiable, largelie: for instructing of them that are vnlearned, plainly: which I haue omitted. For, to treade aloft among you as a tragicall Poet in my buskins, were as fondlie done as to throw water in the sea where it can not be seene: to dilate this discourse for the vnsatiable, were as much as to close vp the mouth of *Curtius* gulfe, that will neuer be stopt but with my life: to lay open euery thing to ỹ ignorant, were without iudgment to charge them beyonde theire strength, which are to be fed like childrẽ, with a litle, and ofte.

What effect my labour wil take amõg you, I am not sure, yet hope the best, at all aduentures I haue committed it to the Presse. *Seiramnes* the *Persian* seeing many men wonder that he

he ſpake wiſely, but nothing that euer he ſpake was regarded: tolde them that wordes were euer in his owne power, but ſucceſſe was neuer within his reache. You may ſee if you pleaſe, that the counſel I bring is good and ſounde, but if you deſpiſe it when it is read, I will comfort my ſelfe as *Seiramnes* did: I haue my bokes in my ſtudy at commaundement: you are out of my walke, & your owne men. I was very willing to write at this time, becauſe I was enformed by ſome of you which heard it with your eares, that ſince my publiſhing the *Schole of Abuſe*, two Playes of my making were brought to the Stage: the one was a cast of Italian deuiſes, called, *The Comedie of Captaine Mario*: the other a Moral, *Praiſe at parting*.

Theſe

These they very impudētly affirme to be written by me since I had set out my inuectiue against them. I can not denie, they were both mine, but they were both pēned two yeeres at the least before I forsoke them, as by their owne friends I am able to proue: but they haue got suche a custome of counterfaiting vpon the Stage, that it is growen to an habite, & will not be lefte. God knoweth, before whom to you all I doe protest, as I shal answer to him at the last day, when al hidden secrets shal be discouered, since the first printing of my Inuective, to this day, I neuer made Playe for them nor any other. Therefore if euer they be so shameles, and graceles to belye me again, I beseech God, as he hath giuē me more wit, to spende my time well:

well: so to sende to them more honestye, to speake a trueth. I coulde purge my selfe of this sclaunder in many words, both how I departed from the City of London, and bestowed my time in teaching yong Gentlemen in the Countrie, where I continue with a very worshipfull Gentleman, and reade to his sonnes in his owne house: but the men are so vaine, & their credite so light, that the least worde I speake is inough to choke them. He that repeheds a vice, & shunnes it not, snuffes the Lampe to make it burne, but puts in no oyle to nourishe the flame. Therefore as sonne as I had inueighed against Playes, I withdrewe my selfe from them to better studies, which so long as I liue I trust to follow.

Thus submitting my booke and

and my ſelf to your iudgement, I leaue to trouble you any farther, craueing this at your hãds before we parte, that if anye Player belie me in your hearing vpon the ſtage, you would rather conſider of the perſon than of the ſpeach, for a Player is like to a Marchants finger, that ſtandes ſometime for a thouſande, ſometime for a cypher, and a Player muſt ſtand as his parte fals, ſometime for a Prince ſometime for a peaſant.

Yours Stephen Goſſon.

The first Action.

IF any that haue knowne me alreay by acquaintance, or shall knowe me hereafter by reading some parte of my simple trauels, chance to wonder, that I whiche heretofore haue not onely so fauoured, but written Playes, that my penne hath bene readier to defend them, then to deface them; now with alteration of minde so depely accuse that which so highly I esteemed. Whatsoeuer hee bee, if hee weigh the reason that moueth mee thereunto, I trust he will both allowe that which by my Schoole of Abuse hath past against them: And thinke it necessary for me at this time, to renue my plea. When I firste gaue my selfe to the studie of Poetrie, and to set my cunning abroache, by penning Tragedies, and Comedies in the Citie of London: perceiuing such a Gordians knot of disorder in euery play house, as woulde neuer bee losed without ex-

tremitie, I thought it better with Alexander to draw ẏ sword that should knappe it a sunder at one stroke, then to seeke ouernicely or gingerly to vndoe it, with the losse of my time and wante of successe. This caused mee to bidde them the base at their owne gole, and to geue them a volley of heathen writers: that our diuines considering the daunger of suche houses as are set vp in London against the Lord, might batter them thoroughly with greater shotte. But such is the queasinesse of our stomacke, that like vnto Trqueilers at the Sea, being ready to cast, we thinke to finde remedy by chaunge of place, sprawling down from the Ship to the Cockboate, yet are neuer the neere, so longe as the humour workes within vs: & acknowledging the mischefe bred by playes we hope to auoid yt by changing their day yet suffer thē still to remaine amonge vs. Wherein we may well be compared to children that holdinge yse in their handes, for discomodities sake are vnwilling to keepe it; & for wantonnes, loth to let it go. Cōmodus a Romane Emperor,

was

was so excellente in throwinge of his darte, that hauinge gotten Sundrie sortes of wilde beastes, as markes for the exercise of his hand, the whole cittie of *Rome* assembled together to behold him, neither sawe him throwe twise at one marke, nor giue any wound which was not deadly: And yt were to bee wished that euery man which taketh vpō him to rebuke sinne, should leuell so streight with Commodus, and sticke so sure, that as oft as he shootes at deformityes, he might hit them, and as ofte as he hittes, kill; So shoulde the readers with the Romanes see, neyther anye kinde of monster twice gaulde, nor anye vice recouer the first wounde. Neuerthelesse as some Philosophers are of this opinion that the heauens because they moue doe yelde a kinde of harmonie in theyr motion, yet yf you requeste to knowe the reasone, why we discerne it not by the eare, their aunswere is, that wee neuer heare it, because wee euer heare it. So the abhominable practises of playes in London haue bene by godly preachers, both at Paules crosse, and

elſe where, ſo zealouſly, ſo learnedly, ſo loudly cried out vpon to ſmall redreſſe; that I may well ſay of them, as the Philoſophers repoꝛte of the mœuing of the heauens, we neuer heare them, becauſe we euer heare the. Whereby I gather, that the wiſedome of man, is able to rule any thinge but man: foꝛ the ſauage and bꝛute beaſts neither grudge to feede where they are appoynted, noꝛ reſiſt when they are driuen from thoſe places, where they loue moſt of all to byte. But whether our eares be wilfully ſtoped, & our eyes muffled, that in hearing, we heare, and not vnderſtand; in ſeeing, we ſee and not perceiue; oꝛ whether the deuill our ancient enemie hath ſtricken ſo deepe and ſo venemous a tothe into the hart of man, as hath infected, and wounded the ſoule to death, I know not well;
Heb.6.8. yet ſure I am, and haue ſufficient warHeb.4.12 rant by the woꝛde of God, that beinge watred with the Pꝛeachinge of the Goſpell, if the fruite wee yelde bee thoꝛnes and bꝛiers, it is a very earemarke of repꝛobates, and of ſuch as are giuen ouer by the Lоꝛde, to their owne ſenſe, to follow deſtruction with full ſaile. The woꝛde of God is liue-

lie, and mightie in operation: being liuelie, if it doe not quicken and ſtirre vs vp to a newenelle of life, it is a token that we haue no life, but are alreadie ſtone deade, in the workes of darkenes: being mightie in operation, both the plaiers and wee muſt be perſuaded, that their idle occupation, hauing ſo ſtoute, ſo ſtrong, ſo puyſſante, ſo mightie an enemie as the worde of God, though the honour and authoritie of their Maſters hold them vp for a time, yet in the end they muſt haue a fall. For neither ſtrong holds, nor inuentions of men, nor any high thing that is exalted againſt the knowledge of God, ſhalbe able to ſtand, whē the ſwte of his Prophetes comes againſt it. Amongeſt all the fauorers of theſe vncircumciſed Philiſtines I meane the Plaiers, whoſe heartes are not right, no mā til of late durſt thruſt out his heade to maynteine there quarrell, but one, in wit, ſimple; in learning, ignorant; in attempt, raſh; in naine, Lodge; whoſe booke, as it came not to my handes in one whole yeere after the priuy printing thereof,

so I confesse, that as it, before this time I answered nothing, partlie because he brought nothing; partly because my hearte was to bigge, to wrastle with him, that wanteth armes. Therefore considering with my selfe that such kinde of sores might bee launced to some, I chose rather to let him ripen and breake of him selfe, that vomiting out his owne disgrace, & being worne out of favour among his own friends, I might triumph in the cause & shedde no blood. Though some of his acquaintaunce haue vaunted to cut and lewe mee I knowe not howe: yet having greater regarde to the soules of many, then to the threatninges of fewe; to the honour of God, then to the pride of ouer bragging and baste Players; by Gods assistance I will proue vnto you, that stage Plaies are not to be sufered in a christian cómon weale. Which I trust I shalbe able sufficiētly to performe, if I giue you a tast both of the causes of Plaies, and of the effectes: of the causes, which I finde by reading; of the effectes, which I knowe by my owne experience. I

hope

hope that no Christiã wilbe so shame-
lesse to say that the doctrine & inuentiõ
of the Deuill, is to bee suffered in that
commõ weale, where the glad tidings
of grace is truelie preached. For to
maintaine the doctrine and inuention
of the Deuil, is a kind of Apostasie &
falling from the Lorde. For God hath-
made vs to his owne likenesse, which Ephes.4.24.
likenesse consisteth not in lineaments
and proportion of the body, but in ho-
linesse and singlenesse of life. There-
fore receiuing the doctrine and inuen-
tions of the Deuill, betweene whome
and God there can bee no truce, no
league, no maner of agreemente, be-
cause the one is holy, the other impure;
the one good, the other euill; the one
light, the other darkenes: we forsake
our God, forsakinge of him, wee lose
his image and likenesse, losinge his i-
mage, wee are not hys children, and
consequently haue no part nor felow-
ship with Christ in the world to come.
What Stage Playes are the doctrine
and inuention of the Deuill, may bee
gathered by Tertullian, who noteth
verie well that the Deuill forefounge

the ruine of his kingdome, both inuented these shewes, and inspired men with deuises to set them out the better thereby to enlarge his dominion and pull vs from God.

And Thomas Lodge in that patchte pamphlet of his wherein he taketh vpon him the defence of playes, little perceiuinge how lustely ỹ chippes flye in his face, whilst he heweth out timber to make the frame, confesseth openly that playes were consecrated by the heathens to ỹ honour of their gods, which in deede is true, yet seemeth it better to ouerthrow them then establish them: for, whatsoeuer was consecrated to the honour of the Heathen Gods was consecrated to idolatrie, Stage Playes by his owne confession were consecrated to the honour of Heathen Gods, therefore consecrated to idolatrie. Being consecrated to idolatrie, they are not of God, if they proceede not from God, they are the doctrine and inuentions of the deuill. This will be counted newe learninge amonge a greate number of my gay countymen, which beare a sharper smacke of Italian deuises

deuiles in their heades, then of Englisſh religion in their heartes. Neuertheleſſe the godly perceiue how lamentable & damnable a caſe we ſtand in: lamentable, becauſe we are ſo aſotted with theſe delightes, ſo blinded with the loue, and drunken with the ſweetnes of theſe vanities, that greedely we flocke together, and with our braineſicke aſſemblies not vnlyke to the Troyanes hale in the horſe, whoſe miſchiefe hath beene diſcouered by the Prophets of the Lorde, and whoſe bowels haue beene manye times gaged with the ſword of his trueth: damnable, becauſe we profeſſe Chriſt, and ſet vp the doctrine of the deuill; wee holde with the hare and run with the hound, heaping vp iudgement vpon our ſoules by this hipocriſie. Certayne it is, that this life of ours is a continuall warreſare, a pitchte fielde, wherein, as the luckerous tounge of our mother Eue hath iuſtly prouoked the Lorde, to ſet the deuill and vs at deadly feude, ſo is it our part to bethinke vs of him, that neuer leaues nibling at our heele. Hee is called the Serpent, the enuious mã, the

the Prince of this worlde, the common enemie of Christe, and of man kinde. Being a Serpent hee is subtile; being envious, he repineth at our estate; being a Prince, hee is mightie; being an enemy, hee is malicious; malice breedeth continuall discorde; continuall discorde, a perpetuall studye and desire to hurt: which the Apostle understading, giueth vs a watche woorde to walke warely. For hauing an enemy so crafty conceited, so well appointed, so envious, so malitious, so willinge to mischeife vs: no doubte but he hath sett vp many trappes, shott many nettes, layted many hookes, to take vs, to tangle vs, to thrattle vs. Which is enough to make vs suspecte euerie pleasure that hee profereth. When Pyrrhus L. Florus. sawe that the Romaynes coulde not be ouer throwne by force of armes, he buried the bodies of them that were slayne; he dealte very honorable with hys prisoners returninge them home without ransome, and sent his Ambassadours to entreate of peace: wherby he made accounte to winne that with undermininge, which open assalt could

neuer

neuer get. The Deuill, whose treachery passeth the shiftes of Pyrrhus, feeling such a terrible push, giuen to his breast by the chaunge of religion, and by the happy entraūce of her Maiestie to the crowne, hath played wilie beguilie euer since. Hee deales verye fauourably with vs now, hee entertayneth his captiues with all manner of curtesie, hee craueth no raunsome for our release, his Ambassadours haue bene a great while amonge vs. First hee sente ouer many wanton Italian bookes, which being trāslated into english, haue poysoned the olde maners of our Country with foreine delights, they haue so hardned the readers harts y seuerer writers are trode vnder foote, none are so pleasunte or plausible as they, that sound some kinde of libertie in our eares. This contempt of good bookes hath bredde a desire of fancies & toyes. For if it be as Ambrose sayth that the decrease of vanitie is the increase of vertue: I may reason of the contrary, that the increase of vanity is the decrease of vertue. Therefore the Deuill not contented with the num-

De fuga seculi.

ber

ber he hath corrupted with reading Italian baudery, because all cãnot reade præsẽteth vs Comedies cut by the same paterne, which drag such a monstrous taile after thẽ, as is able to sweep whole Cities into his lap. They which haue any experience in martial discipline, know ỳ the easiest way to conquere, is either to bribe ỳ Captaine, to betrays his Prince, or to allure ỳ Souldiers, to reuolte & forsake their Captaine. Our enemie whose experience is great by continuall practise had from the beginning tried his cunning vpon Christe but toke the foyle: yet leauing nothing vnsifted that may serue his purpose, and seing that neither riches nor preferment of this world, could moue our Captaine to fall forward and worship him, because we are commanded to followe our Captaine foote by foote which is irksome to performe, hee settes Comedies abroach and erecteth Theaters to make vs fall backwarde & flie the fielde. Happy saith the Prophet is he That walketh not in the Counsell of the vngodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sits

Psalm. 1.

in

in the chaire of pestilence. The counsell of the vngodly is the cunning drift, the deepe search, the subtill cast of the Children of darknes which are sharpe sighted in all kinde of mischiefe. The way of sinners is the procedings and practises of sinners. The chaire of pestilence is the Assembly of wicked worldlings. But if we flocke to Theaters to gase vpon playes, wee walke in the Counsell of the vngodly, because playing is one of those politique hornes which our enemie dosseth against the Gospell; We stand in the way of sinners, because plaies are the procedings & practises of the Gentiles in their Idolatrie; We sit in the chaire of pestilence, because we thrust our selues into the companie of them, which being ouergorged with the preaching of the word, begin to lift at seuerer discipline, and worship the Deuill by falling backward. This Apostacy plungeth vs vp to the throat in sinne and wickednes & ringes a peale for reueng in the eares of God, by whome wee learne that the reward of sinne is a bitter curse. Sithince stag

plaies

plaies are the doctrine of the Deuill; the Counsell of the vngodly; the way of sinners, the chaire of pestilence; the forerunners of a cursse procured to that lande wherein they floorish, howe can they bee suffered in this common weale wherein we professe the name of Christ, except we stand at defiance with Christianity, or proclaime open warre to our soules? Some curious sifter peraduēture may iudge me to be streighter laced thē I neede, or cast this in my teeth, ẏ such christiās as wil borow nothing frō the Gētiles lest they stand in the way of sinners, must neither occupie ships, for they were inuēted by Minerua; nor weare any linē, because it was proper to Osyris; nor exercise almost any kinde of handycraft, for most of them were borowed of the Gentiles. To whome I aunswere with Tertullian, that of things receiued from the Heathens, Some were reuealed vnto them by God, for necessary vses and the benefite of mā; some were inspyred by the Deuill, which vnder the shew of indifferency shadow the corruption of a priuy condition,

Obiection.

Aunsweare *De corona milit.*

dition, by which they are subiect vnto vanitie. Those thinges that are inuented for necessarie vses, as, Shippes, clothing woollen or linnen, Mannuary crafts, may be accepted of Christians without error, for they are the blessings of God bestowed vpon vs; but those things which are neither necessary nor beneficiall vnto man, yet carry in their Foreheades a manyfest print of their first condition, as Maygames, Stageplaies, & such like, cannot be suffred amõg Christians without Apostacy, because they were sucked from the Deuilles teate, to Nurce vp Idolatrie. God thinking him selfe not sufficiently honoured, except the outwarde conuersation of our life do giue a testimony to the worlde of the inwarde holinesse of the minde, chargeth vs seuerely to avoide euery thing that hindereth the outwarde profession of Christianitie. Therefore the Apostles writing to the Churches of Antioch, Syria, Cilicia, iudged it a necessary Burthen to be layed vpon them, that they touch not thinges sacrificed vnto Idoles. Act. 15. vers. 28. and 29.

Where-

Wherefore if ỹ outward vse of things indifferent, as meats, be to be tied to ỹ rule of charitie, and not to be taken, when they offende the consience of the weake; how much lesse ough we to ioyne with idolaters in theire playes, which are naughte of them selues, & offensiue to the godly? yf we be carefull that no pollution of idoles enter by the mouth into our bodies, how diligent, how circumspect, how wary ought we to be, that no corruption of idols, enter by the passage of our eyes & eares into the soule? we knowe that whatsoeuer goeth into the mouth defileth not but passeth away by course of nature; but that which entreth into vs by the eyes and eares, muste bee digested by the spirite, which is chiefly reserued to honor God. This spirite of ours is already defiled with the idolatrye of the Gentiles, if wee be partakers of their sacrifices, and maketh vs stinke in the sight of God, for as he that steales but a trifle is guiltie of theft, so hee that alloweth the least parcell of offringes of the Gentiles is accessary to idolatry if not by ỹ quantitie of ỹ thing, yet by ỹ

nature

nature of the crime. Which being considered, I am forced to saye, that suche men as are erectors of Stage Playes among Christians, either see not that they communicate with the sacrifices and idolatry of the Gentiles, for lacke of knowledge; or seeing it, dissemble the matter for wante of zeale. Two sortes of sacrifice were used among the Heathens, the one, to the Gods of their countrey, the other to the Spirites of the deade, they committed idolatrye in them both. Amonge suche Idolatrous spectacles as they sacrificed to their Gods, Tertullian affirmeth ỳ Playes were consecrated vnto Bacchus for the firste findinge out of wine. These Playes wer not set vp by the Gentiles of any blinde zeale within themselues, but by the motion of the diuell, as may be proued by the originall of them in Rome. This kinde of Idolatrye was long practised among the Grœkes, the Romanes not being acquainted with ỳ same. Therefore ỳ deuill spying his time to bring it into Italie, about 400. yeares after ỳ building of Rome, in ỳ Consulship of Sulpicius & Stolon

Lib. de spectaculis.

the inhabitantes beinge mightelie deuowred with a greate plague, the Deuill foreseeing the time whē the plague should cease, taught ẏ Romanes by the oracles of Sibilla to set forth plaies to appeā ẏ āger of ẏ Gods, ẏ ẏ pestilence ceasing after this solemnising of their plaies, might nusse thē in idolatrie and wātonnesse euer after. For as ẏ wicked spirits which ẏ Gentiles worshipped appeared once fightinge in the plaine of Campania, to whet them to slaughter and bloudshead by this illusion: so did they (saith S. Augustine) with the like subtilty, cause Playes to be consecrated vnto them, wherein theire Adulteries, and Impurities were peinted out, that such as gaue credite to the same, might follow their example, and they that coulde not bee brought to beleeue it, yet seeing theyr Gods delight to bee worshipped so, might giue them selues ouer to abhominable lust. Though the Romans in that horrible Plague that vexed theyr City fetcht the famousest Plaiers out of Hetruria, yèt did not the Sicknes of bodie surcease, because the delicate

Lib. 2. de ciuitate Dei.

delicate phrenſie of plaiyng entred, but the craftines of wicked ſpirits foreſeeing that the peſtilence ſhoulde haue an end, toke aduantage hereby to infect not the bodies, but the manners of the Citizēs with a greater plague. Euerie Seafaring man is able to tell you that there is greater daunger in thoſe ſtormes that forbid you to ſhoote into the Hauen, then in them that wil not ſuffer you to ſaile at al: which policy the Deuill vſed to peruert the Gentiles. For thoſe wicked ſpirites which challenging a diuinitie to themſelues, were worſhipped of the Gentiles, neither regarded the ſmoke of ſacrifices, nor ſhowe of plaies, but the men that offered vp bothe to honour them. By this meanes the Deuill driuing them from the worſhip of the true God, as ſhips from the harbour where they ſhoulde ryde, helde them in greater perill of death then if they had worſhipped no God at all. Sithince it is manifeſt by all Antiquities, if we ſearch them, that plaies are the Sacrifices of the Deuill, taught by him ſelfe to pull vs from the ſeruice of

Aguſt. lib. 1. de ciuitate Dei cap. 32.

our God, as ofte as euer wée set them vp in our Christian Cities, the Diuell, triumpheth and reioyceth therein as in thinges sacrificed by Christians vnto him.

Because that as in the Church singing and praysing the Lorde together as hee him selfe hath instructed vs in his wordes, is a signe by whiche the true God is assured that we sacrifice our hearts vnto him with the Calues of our lippes: So the Diuell perceiuing vs to aduaunce the offringes or sacrifices of the Gentiles, after the same manner of houses, of apparell, of Stages, of Places, that he instructed the Gentiles by his Oracles, hath greate cause to bee merrie, and to holde him selfe honoured thereby. Is it so: and shall wee say wee doe it not with the minde to commit Idolatrie: Truely this aunsweare is like to a draught of colde water in burning Feuers, whereby the bodie is quieted for a time, but the sickenes can neuer be remoued. The noble Scipio Nasica perceiuing that the Citie cannot longe endure whose walles stande

and

and manners fall, when hee ſawe the whole Senate bent to builde vpp Theaters, and ſett out Playes, with earneſt perſuaſion drewe them from it. And Valerius Maximus flatlie affirmeth, that they were not brought in to Rome *Sine pacis rubore*, without a ſteine of diſgrace to the time of Peace. They grewe in time ſo infamous among ẏ Romanes thẽ ſelues, that if any continued in that arte, they were depriued of the dignitie of other Citizens, and remoued by the Cenſors from their Tribe. Auguſt. de ciuit. Dei. lib. 2.

Wherefore I beſeech God ſo to touch the heartes of our Magiſtrates with a perfite hatred of ſinne, and feare of Judgement; ſo to ſtirre vpp ſome noble Scipio in the Courte, that theſe daũſing Chaplines of Bacchus, and all ſuch as ſet vp theſe wicked artes, may be driuen out of Englande, may bee ſhutt from the companie of the Godly, & as open profeſſors of Idolatrie, ſeparated from vs by Sea and Lande. If there be a zeale in authoritie, to baniſh them; a diligence in Preachers to purſue them; a gene-

rall consent in vs to loath them; I dare boldely auouch from my owne experience, that monstrous sinnes, with very light trauell; imminent dãger, with very small troble; olde festred corruptions, in very shorte time wilbe displaced; the Churches in London more frequented, more furnishte, more filled; the diuine seruice of God more regarded, more reuerenced, more kept; and the vtter suppressing of a fewe, breed a sweete reformation in many thousandes.

The 2 Action.

IF the daye wherein wee bee deliuered from the iawes of death, ought to bee as ioyfull to vs as the houer of birth, because the ioy of safetie atchiued is sure, the condition of byrth vncertaine; and because wee are borne without pleasure, saued with gladnes: Both I shal think my study very well employed, and my louing cuntrimen of Englande shall haue cause to reioyce, if it please God by

by my trauell against Plaies, to make me a stay to the ryot of their expences, a discloser of the corruptiõ in their families, and a watchman againste the hazard of their soules. All which as I iudge to proceed of Stage Plays; so must I confute the opinion of them that holde the contrary. Yonge Master Lodge thinking to iett vpon startoppes, and steale an ynche of his hight by the bare name of Cicero, allegeth frõ him, ẏ a Play is the Schoolmistresse of life; the lookinge glasse of manners; and the image of trueth. But finding him selfe too weeke in the knees to stand it out, neither alleadging the place where Tullie saith it; nor bringing any reason of his owne, to proue it; hee flittes from this to the Etymologie of Plaies, frõ thence to the inuentors, and so gallops his wisedome out of breath. It seemeth that Master Lodge saw this in Tulile with other folkes eyes, and not his owne. For to my remembrance I neuer read it in him, neither doe I thinke that Master Lodge can shewe it me. For in his Tusculans second,

third, and fourth booke, he misliketh playes, in his bookes of the common weale, he is sharpe set against them. In his Epistles writing to Marius, who was absent from the playes that were set out at Pompeys charges, he telleth him that if any paine of bodie, or decaye of health withheld him, hee attributeth it rather to fortune, then to his wisdome, but if he contemned those bables, that other men wonder at, and being not hindered with sickness refused to see them of his own accord, he reioyceth greatly in his friedes behalfe, first, that he felt no greefe of bodie, next that he was perfectly whole in minde, because he forbeare to come to those spectacles, which other mē delight in without cause. I would it pleased master Lodge to remember that in cases of conscience no mans authoritie may stand for reason, it is therefore our duetie to weighe before we speake, whether the testimonies of other men will abide the hammeringe, when they come to be wrought by the woords of God, otherwise to take what soeuer they say

Ep. lam. lib. 7.

say for Oracles, and muster them together in proofe of that which neither reason nor conscience doth allow, is as fonde and impertinent an enterprise, as to open our locke with the hatchet, and cleaue our wood with the key.

But because master Lodge will needes father these words vpon Tullie that neuer spake them, I will first sette downe the matter, and the persons of both kindes of playes, then rippe vp euery part of this definition, that you may see how this gentleman like the Foxe at the banquet of the Storke, lickes the outside of the glasse with an emptie stomacke, when his heade will not suffer him to enter in. Aesop. Fab.

The argumēt of Tragedies is wrath, crueltie, incest, iniurie, murther eyther violent by sworde, or voluntary by poyson.

The persons, Gods, Goddesses, furies, fiendes, Kinges, Quenes, and mightie men. The ground worke of Commedies, is loue, cose-

nedge

nedge, flatterie, bawderie, slye conueighance of whordome. The persõs, cookes, queanes, knaues, baudes, parasites, courtezannes, lecherous olde men, amorous yong men. Therefore Plautus in his prologue before the comedie of the captiues, desiring to curry fauoure with his auditours, exhorteth them earnestly to marke that playe, because it shall cast no such stenche of impuritie into theire noses as others doe. There is in it (saith he) neither forsworne baude, nor harlot, nor bragging souldier. Why could he not giue this commendation to all the rest? because it was the practise of the deuill, to weaue in a threed of his owne spinning. Why is this rather purged of filthines then the rest? because it is the iuglinge of the deuill, to turne himselfe sometimes to an Angel of light, to deceiue vs the sooner. The best play you can picke out, is but a mixture of good and euill, how can it be then the schoolemistres of life? The beholding of troubles and miserable slaughters that are in Tragedies, driue vs to immoderate sorrow, heauines, womanish

nish weeping and mourning, where-
by we become louers of dumpes, and
lamentatiõ, both enemies ro ſo;titude.
Comedies ſo tickle our ſenſes with a
pleaſanter vaine, that they make vs
louers of laughter, and pleaſure, with-
out any meane, both foes to tempe-
rance, what ſchooling is this? Some-
time you ſhall ſee nothing but the ad-
uentures of an amo;ous knight, paſ-
ſing from countrie to countrie fo; the
loue of his lady, encoũtring many a te-
rible monſter made of b;oune paper, &
at his reto;ne, is ſo wonderfully chan-
ge;. that he can not be knowne but by
ſome poſie in his tablet, o; by a b;oken
ring, o; a handkircher, o; a piece of a
cockle ſhell, what learne you by that?
When ỹ ſoule of your playes is eyther
meere trifles, o; Italian bauery, o;
wooing of gentle women, what are we
taught? paraduenture you will ſaye, A common & fond obiectiõ.
that by theſe kinde of playes, the au-
thours inſtruct vs how to loue with
conſtancie, to ſue with modeſtie, and
to loth whatſoeuer is contrarie vn-
to this. In my opinion, the diſci- Anſwere.
pline we gette by playes is like to
the

the iuſtice that a certaine Schoolemaſter taught in Perſia, which taught his ſchollers to lye, and not to lye; to deceiue, and not to deceiue, with a diſtinction howe they might doe it to their friends, & how to their enemies; to their friends, for exerciſe; to their foes, in earneſt. Whereun many of his ſchollers became ſo ſkilfull by practiſe, by cuſtome ſo bolde, that their deareſt friendes payde moze for their learning then their enemies. I would wiſh the Players to beware of this kind of ſchooling, leaſt that whilſt they teach youthfull gentlemē how to loue, and not to loue; how to woo, and not to woo, their ſchollers grow as cunning as the Perſians.

Xenopho. Lib. 1. de inſtit. Cyri.

As the miſchiefe that followed that diſcipline of Perſia enforced them to make a lawe, that yong men ſhould euer after be taught ſimply as houſeholders vſe to inſtruct their families: ſo I truſt, that when the Londoners are ſufficiently beaten with the hurte of ſuch leſſōs as are learned at Plaies, if not for conſcience ſake, yet for ſhunning the miſchiefe that may priuately

breake

breake into euery mans house, this methode of teaching will bee come so hatefull, that euen worldly pollicy without any gramercy shalbe driuen to banish it.

Sappho writing to her Louer Phaon, telleth him, that her study pæpes out in her behauiour, and Thalia her Muse hath made her wanton. Howe true this assertion is, appeareth by Mathematicians, which are solitary; musitians, whose mindes are as variable as their arte. This may suffice to persuade vs that no manner of goodnes can bee learned at a play, partly because the best is a mixture of good and euill, as shalbe showen more euidently by the formall cause thereof when I come to that place. The minde of it selfe is simple without mixture or composition, therefore those instructions that are giuen to the minde must bee simple without mingle mãgle of fish & flesh, good & bad where both are proffred, the hereditacie corruptiõ of our nature taketh ỹ worst and leaueth the best. Vpon this cõsideratiõ Aristotle vtterly forbiddeth yõg men Ouid. Epist.

Polit. 7. ca. vlt.

men of Plaies till they bee setled in minde & immoueable in affection lest comming to the Stage to fetche Physicke for loue, they quench their heate with a pynte of water and a pottle of fire; partly because that whiche is learned, must be learned of the best, least the example of vngodly Masters, poyson vs rather the instructe vs. But whether Playes, for the matter; or Players, for their manners; be fitte Schoolmasters of honestie, I report me to them that by frequenting Theaters are very well acquainted with the argument of the one, the life of the other. If any goodnes were to bee learned at Playes it is likely that the Players them selues which committ euery sillable to memory shoulde profitte most, because that as euery man learneth so hee liueth; and as his study is, such are his manners; but the dayly experience of their behauiour, sheweth, that they reape no profit by the discipline them selues; how then can they put vs in any good hope to be instructed thereby when wee haue the sight of such lessons, but an houre or

two

two as they ſtudy and practiſe euerie daye, yet are neuer the better. Maſter Lodge finding ſome peeuiſh inder or gatherer of Tullie to be a ſceope, is very wel contented to winke for company, and thinking his worde ſo currant to goe for payment, woulde gladly perſuade vs vpon Tullies credite that a Play is the Schoolmiſtres of life. Wherein I perceiue hee is no changeling, for hee diſputeth as ſoundly being from the vniuerſitie and out of exerciſe, as hee did when hee was there, and at his booke.

The next property that of his owne braine, (but in Ciceroes name) hee giues to a Play, is, that it is a very Glaſſe of behauiour. The corruption of manners is there reuealed and accuſed. Which is eaſily confuted, by the circumſtaunce of the place, of the perſon, of the manner, and of the end of accuſation. For the place; no priuate mans life ought to be brought in queſtion or accuſed, but where hee may pleade in his owne defence and haue indifferent iudges to determine the cauſe, to that ende receiue wee

a couple of eares that both partes might be heard, both equally weighed, & therfore did Alexander in iudgement stop one eare with his finger reseruing it wholly for the defendant. At Stage Plaies it is ridiculous, for the parties accused to replye, no indifferency of iudgement can be had, because the worste sorte of people haue the hearing of it, which in respecte of there ignorance, of there ficklenes, and of there furie, are not to bee admitted in place of iudgement. A Iudge must be graue, sober, discrete, wise, well exercised in cases of gouernement. Which qualities are neuer founde in the baser sort.

A Iudge must be immoueable, uncorrupted, vpright, neither turning to the right hand, nor to the left; the meaner sorte tottre, they are caried away with euery rumor, and so easily corrupted, that in the Theaters they generally take vp a wonderfull laughter, and shout altogether with one voyce, when they see some notable cosenedge practised, or some slie conueighance of baudry brought out of Italy. Wherby they

they ſhowe themſelues rather to like it then to rebuke it. A iudge muſt neither be inflamed with choler, nor blinded wᵗ affectiõ; The rudeſt of the people are ſometime rauiſhed with euery giewgawe, ſometime ſo headie, that they runne together by heapes, they know not whither; and lay about with theire clubbes, they ſee not why. Which thing the auncient Philoiophers conſidering called them a monſter of many heades. If the commen people which reſorte to Theaters being but ã aſſemblie of Tailers, Tinkers, Cordwayners, Saylers, olde Men, yong Men, Women, Boyes, Girles, and ſuch like, be the iudges of faultes there painted out, the rebuking of manners in that place, is neyther lawfull nor conuenient, but to be held for a kinde of libelling, and defaming. Howſoeuer they face it out with their owne cardes, pretending that as the Painter in his ſhoppe expreſſeth one or other by a counterfaite: ſo the Poet on ſtages preſenteth you a picture of his owne drawing, wherein you may behold the whole life of man, Obiection. Anſwere,

it appeareth by antiquitie, that the Poets which were before, had another meaning: for as any man had displeased them, to reueng theire owne cause they studied to present him vpon the stage, there did they rustle, and taunt; scoffe, and nippe; thunder, and lighten, and spue vp theire cunning to deface him. Whereupon grewe one of the lawes of the twelue tables, that no man should be so hardie as to write any thing, whereby the good name of any bodie might be hurt; they would not haue the life and behaviour of the citizens, subiect eyther to a Poets inkehorne, or a Players tongue, but to the seate of iustice.

Cicer. in his 4. booke of the. cõmon weale

Epist. lib. 2.

This may be gathered by the Epistle of Horace to Augustus, and by other famous writers, which hauinge curiously searched ỹ lawes of the Romaines, confesse in plaine words, that the ouerlashing of players was so restrayned. Whether this be the practise of Poets in these dayes you may perceiue by the drift of him that wrote the play termed the three Ladies of London, which in the Catastrophe maketh

maketh Loue and Conſcience to be examined how thrie good ladiſhippes like of playes? Loue anſweres that ſhe deteſteth them, becauſe her guttes are tourned outward, and all her ſecret conueighaunce, is blazed with colours to the peoples eye. Conſcience like a kindharted gentlewoman doth alow them.

In this pointe the Poet makes ſo much haſt to his iorneyes end, that he throwes him ſelfe headlong downe the hill. For neither Loue diſliked them, before he had maried her to Diſſimulation, whoſe propertie is to ſay one thing and thinke another: nor Conſcience allowed them, before he had ſpotted her with all abhomination, whoſe nature is to allowe that which is like her ſelfe, filthie, corrupt, ſpotted, and defiled. The writer of the plaie called London againſt the three Ladies confeſſeth in his prologe that he made it partly for enuie, partly for a vaine glorious minde. For enuie: becauſe his ſtomack would not beare the commendations, that other men gaue to the three Ladies in his hearing.

For vaine glorie: because he straue to do better himselfe, and mard the cushion; somewhat I graunt he bettered it in sheue, touching the substance he doth but cauill as I woulde declare, if it were not from the matter I take in hand. By these fewe you may gather of all the rest, and perswade your selues that as stages and Theaters are not allowed by the lawes of God, or man, to medle with disorders: so is it not the marke that their authours shoote at when they fill these roomes. If any deformity be reprehended there, it is to be done by the players mouth, he that will sheue another man his fault, must purge himselfe first. For as they were forbidden in old time to expounde ame Oracles which had ame infection about theire bodies: so haue they no grace in rebuking others, that nourish a canker in their owne soules. How are they able to pull vs vp that grouel as flatte in the dust as we? what credit, hath any good counsell in Players lippes, when it workes no amendment in themselues? Concerning the maner

Mat. 7. ver. 3.

Plutarch.

of

of rebuking whosoeuer taketh that office vpon him must do it secretly, of compassion, and in the spirit of meeknes. Secretly: because we ought not to defame the partie rebuked against the law of charitie, or the rule of Christ: the law of charitie, which couereth the multitude of offences; the rule of Christ which willeth vs to drawe our brother aside and tell him our minde.

Of compassion: for he that rebuketh must be inwardly stricken with greefe of heart to see the maiestie of God offended, and the soule of his brother hazarded.

So Paul writing against an incestuous person, confesseth that he did it with many teares, whereby he giueth vs to vnderstand how he pitied the offender, and lamented the damnable case he stood in. 2. Cor. 2. ve 4. In the spirit of meeknes: because we ought to consider our owne weaknes, which are subiecte to infirmities, and may be tempted as much as other. Gallat. 6. ve 1. But when any thing is reprehended by Players vpon the Stage, it is openly blowne into the

eares of many and made a by worde, it proceedeth not of sorrow, or compassion towards him that hath offended, but springeth either of ỹ Poets mallice, for so Eupolis hãdled Alcibiades; or of corruption, as Aristophanes dealt with Socrates and Cleon; with Socrates, in his Comedie called The cloudes, wherin he was hyred by Anytus and Melitus to discredit him; with Cleon in his Comedie named, The men at armes, bribed by Nicias and Demosthenes (as some writers suspect) to do the like.

August. 2. de ciuit. dei.

It is not spoken in the spirit of meeknes, but with a scoffing, and tearinge spirit, altogether vnmeete for such a purpose. The white that rebukers ought to leuil at, is the recouerie of him that hath trodde awrie. So Peter bidds Simon the sorcerer to repent that his sinne might be forgiuen him. So Paul cõmandeth the Church of Corinth to deliuer the incestuous man vnto Satan that his soule might be safe in the day of the Lord. But neither the Poets which penne the playes, nor the Actors that present them

Act. 8. 21

1. Cor. 5. 5.

them vpon the Stage, doe seeke tod o any good vnto such as they rebuke, for the Poets intente, is, to wreake his owne anger, as I shewed you of Eupolis & those y were restrained by the Twelue tables; the Actors either hire for their own profit, as the players in London; or followe the humor of their owne fancies, and youthfull delightes, as the studentes of the vniuersities, and the Inns of Courte.

Therefore vpon the place, vpon the person, vpon the methode, vpon the ende of representention, I conclude, that a plaie, can bee no looking glasse of behauiour, and the rebuking of manners is as fit for the Sage, as the picture of Chastitie for the stues. Yet is Master Lodge very eager to force it vpon me, for Tullies sake, vsing his olde facion of disputing, compelled with hunger when reason is scants, either to flye to a blinde terte, or to plaie the woman & braule it out. He rowseth on farther in this barge and holdes it harde that a plaie is the Image of trueth. Wherein he fareth as mariners at Sea, who haue no more ti-

tle to that they haue passed, and leste behinde them; then to that which remayneth vntouched, and lyeth before them.

As the other two properties which he posted ouer, are sufficiently proued, not to belong to Comedies, for which he clames them: so (God willing) you shall perceiue, that he erreth as boldely vpon this, without any commission to beare him out. The perfectest Image is that, which maketh the thing to seeme, neither greater nor lesse, then in deede it is. But in Playes, either those thinges are fained, that neuer were, as Cupid and Psyche plaid at Paules; and a greate many Cōedies more at ỹ Blacke friers and in euery Playe house in London, which for breuities sake I ouerskippe: or if a true Historie be taken in hand, it is made like our shadowes, longest at the rising and falling of the Sunne, shortest of all at hie noone. For the Poets driue it most commonly vnto such pointes, as may best showe the maiestie of their pen, in Tragicall speaches; or set the hearers

a

a gogge, with discourses of loue; or painte a fewe antickes, to fitt their owne humors, with scoffes & tauntes; or wring in a shewe, to furnish the Stage, when it is to bare; when the matter of it selfe comes shorte of this, they followe the practise of the cobler, and set their teeth to the leather to pull it out.

So was the history of Cæsar and Pompey, and the Playe of the Fabii at the Theater, both amplified there, where the Drummes might walke, or the pen rustle, when the history swelled, and ran to hye for the number of y persons, that shoulde playe it, the Poet with Proteus cut the same fit to his owne measure; when it afforded no pompe at al, he brought it to the racke, to make it serue. Which inuincible proueth on my side, that Plays are no Images of trueth, because sometime they hãdle such thinges as neuer were, sometime they runne vpon truethes, but make them seeme longer, or shorter, or greater, or lesse then they were, according as the Poet blowes them vp with his quill, for aspiring heades;

or

or minceth them ſmaller, for weaker ſtomakes.

I may boldely ſay it, becauſe I haue ſeene it, that the Palace of pleaſure, the Golden Aſſe, the Æthiopian hiſtorie, Amadis of Fraunce, the Rounde table, baudie Comedies in Latine, French, Italian, and Spaniſh, haue beene throughly ranſackt, to furniſh the Playe houſes in London. Now is it poſſible that our Playemakers heades, running through Genus and Species & euery difference of lyes, roſenages, baudries, whoredomes, ſhould preſēt vs any ſchoolemiſtres of life, looking glaſſe of māners, or Image of trueth? for with

Obiection. ſaith the Author of the Playe of playes ſhowen at the Theater, the three and twentieth of Februarie laſt, They ſhalbe nowe purged, the matter ſhalbe good.

Aunſwere. Bee it as hee ſayth, let vs graunte him that hee may haue Playes, if hee pleaſe whoſe matter is good, ſimple, De ſpectaculis, ſweete, and honeſt; yet muſt I aunſwere him with Tertullian that as no man, which deſireth to giue you a deadly

deadly poyson will temper the same with gaull, and Elleborus, or any thing that is bitter, and vnpleasaunt; but with sweete & holsome confectiõs: So the Deuill, at Playes, wil bring the comfortable worde of God, which, because it nourisheth of nature is very conuenient to carry the poyson into our vaines.

But sith Buchanans booke is an old wormeaten obiection which was laide in my dish at my first publishing the schoole of abuse, you shall see whether it be lawfull for Christians to play it, when I handle the representation of playes though theirs matter be honest. As for that glosing plaie at ỹ Theater which profers you so faire, there is enterlaced in it, a baudie song of a maide of Kent, and a litle beastly speach, of the new stabled rage, both which I am compelled to burie in silence, being more ashamed to vtter them, then they. For as in Tragedies some points are so terrible, that the Poets are constrayned to turne them from the peoples eyes; so in the song of the one, the speache of the other,

somewhat is so dishonest, that I can not with honestie repeate it. Neuertheiesse if they should altogether sweepe of this dongе from the Stage, and employ themselues soberlie to rebukinge of manners; as I haue already proued the Stage to be vnfitte for such a purpose, so I perswade my selfe, that the other is but the vngglinge of the deuill, who perceyuing his comedies begin to stinke, giueth vs a graine or two in the weight of the cause, to make vp his market, and as

2. De ciuit. Dei. Augustine noteth is contented sometime to be euill spoken of in Playes to bleare our eyes. He affordeth to vs as he did to Plautus some small number of plaies without loue or curtesane, yea with verie good matter, to maintaine the idolatry of the Gentils.

Obiection. The number of the yeares wherein they florished amonge the Grækes, though they be reconed to be thirtene hundreth, yet if they had mounted to

Answere. thirtene thousande this is not enough to perswade vs that are Christians to do the like. For the playes of the Grecians are to be receyued among Christians,

ſtians, if their Gods be to be honoured, but theire Gods are by no meanes to be honoured, therefore theire playes are by no meanes to be receyued. Tertullian teacheth vs that euery part of the preparation of playes, was dedicated to some heathē god, or goddeſſe, as the houſe, ſtage, apparrell, to Venus; the muſike, to Apollo; the penning, to Minerua, and the Muſes; the pronuntiacion and action to Mercurie: he calleth the Theater Sacrarium Veneris, Venus chappell, by reſorting to which we worſhippe her. De ſpectaculis

The Cenſors in Rome whoſe manner was once in fiue yeare ſtraitly to examine, and redreſſe diſorders, hauing a great care to auoyde all corruptions of manners, were verie painefull in racinge and deſtroying Theaters, which poyſoned theire countrie with the louſneſſe and diſſolute behauioure of ỹ Grækes. Therefore when Pompey had built a ſtately Theater of ſtone at his owne charges, fearing that in time to come it would be defaced by the Cenſors ſommoning the people to the dedication of

of the same, placed a chappel to Venus on the toppe, and called it not a The-
Obiection. ater, but Venus temple consecrated vnto her. Though the names of hea-
then gods or goddesses be of thẽselues no more hurtfull, then the names of o-
Answere. ther men, that are dead: yet triũphing vnder those titles with the Gentiles, and attributing a kind of diuinitie vn-to them, as the Gentiles did, is to be defiled with theire idolatrie. What is idolatrie, but to giue that which is pro-per to God, vnto them that are no gods? what is so proper vnto God, as worship to his maiestie? trust, to his strength? prayer, to his helpe? thanks, to his goodnes? setting out the Stage playes of the Gentiles, so we worship that we stoupe to the names of heathẽ idols; so we trust ẏ we giue our selues to the patronage of Mars, of Venus, of Iuppiter of Iuno, and such like, so we pray, ẏ we call for theire succour vpon the Stage; so we giue thakes for the benefits we receiue, that we make thẽ ẏ fountaines of al our blessings, wher-in if we thinke as we speake, we com-mit idolatry, because we bestow ẏ vpõ

the

the idols of ỹ Gentils, which is proper to God; if we make a diuorce betwene the tongue & the heart, honouringe the gods of ỹ heathens in lips, & in iesture, not in thought, yet it is idolatrie, because we do ỹ which is quite cõtrary to ỹ outward profession of our faith. God tearmeth himselfe to be iealous, & iealosie misliketh the smallest iestures or signes of familiaritie, that are giuen to strangers. If Sidrach Misach, & Abednago had not knowne this, they might haue vailed and bended, to the Kings idoll, but becaule ỹ outwarde sheus, must represẽt ỹ which is within, they would not seeme to be, that they were not: whose example is set downe as a rule for vs to followe. A bodie would thinke it to be somewhat tollerable, to sitt at the table of Idolators, or to eat of ỹ meate that hath bene consecrated vnto idols, whẽ we throw not our bodies downe before thẽ, yet is not ỹ to be suffred among Christians, as I proued before by ỹ Apostles, much les ought this to be suffred among vs, ỹ any should take vnto thẽ ỹ names of ỹ idols, and iette vpon stages in their attire, contrary to the counsel of Saint 1. Epist. ca. 5.

Iohn

Iohn which exhorteth vs to kepe our selues frō idols, wherein he doth not onely forbid the worshipping, but the representing of an idoll. So subtill is the deuill, that vnder the colour of recreation, in London, and of exercise of learning, in the vniuersities, by seeing of playes, he maketh vs to ioyne with the Gentiles, in theire corruption. Because the sweete numbers of Poetrie flowing in verse, do wōderfully tickle the hearers eares, the deuill hath tyed this to most of our playes, that whatsoeuer he would haue sticke fast to our soules, might slippe downe in suger by this intisement, for that which delighteth neuer troubleth our swallow. Thus when any matter of loue is enterlarded though the thinge it selfe bee able to allure vs, yet it is so sette out with sweetnes of wordes, fitnes of Epithites, with Metaphors, Alegories, Hyperboles, Amphibologies, Similitudes, with Phrases, so pickt, so pure, so proper; with action, so smothe so liuely, so wantō; that the poyson creeping on secretly without griefe chokes vs at last, and hurleth vs downe

Tertul de Corona.

in

in a deade sleepe. As the Diuell hath brought in all that Poetrie can sing, so hath hee sought out euery streine that musicke is able to pipe, and moreouer all kind of instruments unto that compasse, simple and mixte.

For the eye beside the beautie of the houses, and the Stages, hee sendeth in Gearish apparell maskes, dauting, tumbling, daunsing of gigges, galiardes, morisces, hobbihorses; showing of iudgeling casters, nothing forgot, that might serue to set out the matter, with pompe, or ravish the beholders with varietie of pleasure. To seeke this, is, to spend our studies in things that are meere naturall, to spende our time so is to be carnally minded, but to be carnally minded is death, howe then can wee looke to bee Partakers of the benefittes of Christ, which runne a contrary race to him? Where no promise is, there can be no fayth, through the whole course of Scripture as there is no promise for such as liue in the flesh, so hell and damnation is sharpely threatned, and shall wee flatter our selues with a Rom. 8

wanne hope, to nourish the delightes of the fleshe while wee liue, neuerthelesse to winne heauen after death? Paule flatlie pronounceth the delights of the flesh to be enmitie against God, if they be enmity, pursuing them so greedely as we doe, wee bend our selues openly agaynst him, that payde the price of our rãsome with the bloode of his sonne, O horrible ingratitude; we followe the pompe and vanitie of the wicked worlde, which we renounced in Baptisme, O dãnable apostacy. The heathens, that knewe not God, but naturally guided them selues by reason, iudged thẽ rather to be beastes then men, which fixed their studies in wanton spectacles, and spending good howers in euill exercise, seemed to wroote in the earth like swine. Therfore Marius in an oration to the Romans reckoneth this vpp among the rest of his vertues to gett him credite, that hee neither banqueted curiously, nor behelde playes: hauing before giuẽ account of his bringing vp, howe hee was taught to suffer hunger & thirst, yeare and colde, to beare all weather

Obiect.

Sal. Iugurth.

in

in the field, by the way of contempte hee setteth out a softe, a silken, a Courting kinde of life, fitter for women then for men, wherein he holdeth playes so vnfit for manly discipline, that attributing it for an ornament to his honour to mislike them, he priuily insinuates a reproach vnto such as loue them.

Sithince you see euē by ỹ examples of the Romans, that playes are Rathbane to the gouernement of commonweales, and that Players by the iudgement of them, are infamous persons, vnworthy of the credite of honest Citizens, worthy to be remoued from their Tribe: if not for religion, yet for shame, that the Gentiles should iudge you at the last daye, or that Publicanes and sinners should passe into the kingdome of God before you, withdraw we your feete from Theaters, with noble Marius; set downe some punishment for Players, with the Roman Censors; shewe your selues to be Christians, & with wicked spectacles bee not puld from discipline, to libertie; from vertue to pleasure; from

God, to Mammon, let nothing be acceptable in your eyes, that is not holy; nor sweete in your eares that is not heauenly; so shall you preuent the scourge by repentance, that is cõming towarde you; and fill vp the gulfe, that the Diuell by playes hath digged to swallowe you.

The 3 Action.

Such ought to be the liberty of speach in euery well gouerned commonweale, that neither vertue might lacke an open friende, nor vice an enemy, & happy no doubt were wee in Engeland; if as vertue is neuer commended in cloudes, so vice might bee touchte in the open Sunshine. But we are so generally giuen to flatter our selues, and Parasites so ready to couer our faultes, that because we loue our deformities wee defend them, and had rather excuse them, then

then shake them off. This makes many writers willinger to praise some without deserte, than to rebuke any, vpon iuste occasion, for, to commend men vnworthely, is taken for curtesie; to dispraise though iustly, is thought for the most parte a poynte of enuy. Neuertheleſſe ſithince tongues are giuen vnto vs to speake, and eares vnto euery man to heare, that the one might teach, ỹ other be ready to receiue good Counsell, and receiuing it, practise the same in life: according to the measure of those giftes that God hath giuen mee, I will speake somewhat farther against Playes, requesting my countrymen to open their eares as they do their bottles, and shake out the duſt of contentiõ that lyes within for corrupting good liquour when they haue it.

And because woordes many times are as fruitleſſe as addle egges, when conception is weake and without life.

If any bée so captious as for the exercise of his witte to holde me Playe, and prepare him selfe to encounter

me in any one of mine actions or in all, I must callenge the lawes of the tennis court at his handes, that is to take whatsoeuer I send him, right; and returne it to, faire aboue the line. Whatsoeuer he be that loketh narrowly into our Stage Playes, or considereth how, and which ways they are represented, shall finde more filthynes in them, thē Players dreame off. The Law of God very straightly forbids men to put on womēs garments, garments are set downe for signes distinctiue betwene sexe & sexe, to take vnto vs those garments that are manifest signes of another sexe, is to falsifie, forge, and adulterate, contrarie to the expresse rule of the words of God. Which forbiddeth it by threatning a curse vnto the same.

Exod. All that do so are abhomination vnto the Lord, which way I beseech you shall they bee excused, that put on, not the apparrell onely, but the gate, the gestures, the voyce, the passions of a woman? All which like the wreathinges, and woundinge of a snake, are flexible to catch, before they speed;

and

and binde vppe cordes when they haue possession. Some there are that thinke this commaundement of God to be restrayned to them, that goe abroade in womens attyre and vse it for iugglinge, to shaddowe adulterie. Obiection.

These interpreters like vnto narrowe mouthed vessels, will receyue nothing without losse, except it bee slenderly powred in accordinge to the straightnes of theire owne makinge. These men must vnderstande, that, that can beare noe excuse, which God condemneth, such is the integritie, vniformitie, and simplicitie of trueth ỹ it is euer like vnto it selfe, it neuer carrieth two faces in one hoode, that thinge is no where, nor at any time lawfull by the word of God which is not euer, and euery where lawfull. Answere.

Though the heathen Philosophers which knew not the trueth, because they were ignorant in God the fountaine of trueth according to theire owne fãcies held one thing to be sometime good, & sometimes euil: yet will not God be mocked wᵗ Philosophers

dreames. Whatsoeuer he simply pronounceth, euill, can neuer be conditionally good and lawfull. I trust they will not haue God which is ỳ Author of all wisdome, al learning, all artes, to be ruder in setting downe to his people the precepts of life, then Philosophers are to giue to their scholers ỳ precepts of arte. They study in teaching of theire auditours, to write generally and vniuersally, and shall God in his tables be tyed to specifications, particularities, and exceptions? no, no, the same God that saith thou shalt not couet thy neighbours wife, saith thou shalt in no place, & at no time couet her; he ỳ forbiddeth thee to steale, cõmandeth that thou neuer steale; and he that chargeth thee not to put on womens garments, chargeth thee in no place, and neuer to put thẽ on. Neuertheles we will wade somewhat further in this point, and see whether by ỳ Philosophers them selues it may be suffred. I trust they wil graunt me that euery lye is sinne, for the deuill is the father of all lyes, as oft as euer he lyeth, he speaketh of his owne. Aristotle in the

Matthew. 8.

Ethico. 4. cap. 7.

thic-

thickeſt fogge of his ignorance concerning God, pronounceth a lye to bee naught of it ſelfe, and to be fled. Let vs therefore conſider what a lye is, a lye is, Actus cadens ſuper indebitam materiam, an acte executed where it ought not. This acte is diſcerned by outward ſignes, euery man muſt ſhow him ſelfe outwardly to be ſuch as in deed he is. Outward ſignes conſiſt eyther in words or geſtures, to declare our ſelues by wordes or by geſtures to be otherwiſe then we are, is an act executed where it ſhould not, therefore a lye. Aqui part. Theolo. 2. Q. C X art. 3

The proſe is euident, the conſequēt is neceſſarie, that in Stage Playes for a boy to put one the attyre, the geſture, the paſſions of a woman; for a meane perſon to take vpon him the title of a Prince with counterfeit porte, and traine, is by outwarde ſignes to ſhewe them ſelues otherwiſe then they are, and ſo with in the compaſſe of a lye, which by Ariſtotles iudgement is naught of it ſelfe and to be fledde.

Some other there are that take greater occaſion of ſtumbling at Gregory Obiect.

Nazi-

Naziancen, Bucchanan, & such like, than euer those famous men did offer. It cannot bee denied that Gregory Naziancen one of the fathers of the Church, wrote a Playe of Christe; Bucchanan wrote an other of Iohn Baptist, to what ende? To be Plaid vpon Stages: neither Players nor their friendes are able to proue it.

Aunswere. Yow thē: As the beginning of poetrie in the bookes of Moses, & Dauid, was to sett downe good matter in numbers, that the sweetenesse of the one might cause the other to continue, and to bee the deeper imprinted in the mindes of men: So Naziancen and Bucchanan perceiuing the corruption of the Gentiles, to avoyde that which is euill, and yet keepe that which is good, according to the true vse of Poetrie, penned these bookes in numbers with interloquutions dialoguewise, as Plato and Tullie did their Philosophy, to be reade, not be played.

For Naziancen detesting the corruption of the Corpus Christi Playes that were set out by the Papistes, and inueighing against thē, thought it better

ter to write the passion of Christ in nũ bers hym selfe, that all such as delight in numerositie of speach might reade it, not beholde it vpon the Stage, where some base fellowe that plaids Christe, should bring the person of Christ into contempt.

So Bucchananus wrote his playe of Iohn Baptist for the kinge of Scots to reade, that beholding therein, the practise of Parasits in Herods court, The Tyranny of Herod powred out vpon the messenger of the Lord, & the punishment that followed: He might learne to gouerne his owne house, and beware what entreate he giues to the Prophettes of God.

If it shoulde bee Plated, one must learne to trippe it like a Lady in the finest fashion, another must haue time to whet his minde vnto tyranny that he may giue life to the picture hee presenteth, whereby they learne to counterfeit, and so to sinne. Therefore whatsoeuer such Playes as conteine good matter, are set out in print, may be read with profite, but cannot be playd, without a manifest breach of

Gods

Obiection. Gods cõmaundement. Let the Author of the playe of playes & pastimes, take heede how he reasõ ỳ actiõ, pronũtiation, agility of body are ỳ good gifts of God. *Ergo* plaies cõsisting of these cannot be euill. The argument is faulty, and followes not, for so might the Adulterer defend himselfe: the pricke of desire is naturally giuen vnto man by God, all sortes of apparell are his blessings, *Ergo* to couet another mãs wife, to put on the apparell of a womã cannot be euill. Notwithstanding the one hath so little substance to vtter it selfe, the other so fewe sinewes in it, to giue it strength, that neither of both is to be

Answere allowed. Action, pronuntiatiõ, apparel, agility, musicke, seuerally considered are the good blessings of God, nothing hurtfull of their owne nature, yet being bound vp together in a bundle, to set out the pompe, the plaies, the inuẽtiõs of the Duell, it is abhominable in the sight of God, & not to be suffred among Christiãs. Euery streame hath a taste of the spring from whence it flowes, sweete or sower; euery branch is partaker of the quality of the tree whereon it

ſt grewe, hote or cold; and euery play to ỹ worldes end, if it be preſented vp on the Stage, ſhall carry that brand on his backe to make him knowne, which the deuil clapt on, at the firſt beginning, that is, idolatrie. The Godly can neuer like of that which in a diameter is oppoſit to the croſſe of Chriſt, whoſoeuer is in the way of God beholdeth no vanity, the perfect way of God is Chriſt, and ſhall we that profeſſe ỹ name of Chriſt behold this vanitie? The preparation of Stages, apparell, & ſuch like as ſetteth out our plaies in ſhewes of pompe & ſtate, is it that we wonder and gaze at, by Tullie it is flouted and laught to ſcorne, ỹ ſtatelynes of the preparation drowneth ỹ delight which the matter affords, therfore he doubteth not but Marius could very willingly abſent himſelfe from it, what delight (ſaith he) hath the ſight of 600. mules in Clytemneſtra; or 3000. cuppes in the Troian horſe, or varietie of ſoldiemen & horſmen in ſome ſkirmiſh, thoſe things ỹ made ỹ cõmon people wonder, would haue brought no delight at al to thee. Macrin' ſucceeding Antonius

Epiſt. ad Maur.

Antonius in the Romane empyre, & being at Antioche, gaue him selfe dai ly to beholding Playes, for which hee grewe into contempte among all his frendes, and is noted of infamy by He rodian.

lib. 2.

The waste of expences in these spectacles that scarce last like shoes of browne paper, the pulling on, and this study to prancke vp thẽselues to please our eies, was longe agoe cõdemned by the heathẽ Cato, whose opiniõ is registred to be this, that such carefulnes of our bodies, is a carelesnes of our vertues. Shall Tullie, Herodian, Cato condemne this glittering, this pompe, this diligẽce in setting foorth of plaies, for vanity, for wantonnes, for negligence of honesty: and shall wee that vaũte of the law, of the Prophets, of ỹ gospel, of God himselfe, so looke, so gaze, so gape vpõ plaies, that as men ỹ stare on the head of Mæduſa & are turned to stones, wee freeze vnto ỹe in our owne follies? If the lawes and examples of these heathẽs haue no force to moue vs, whose wisedome when wee consider it, was so great, that they could

coulde not bee deceiued in so plaine a case; whose vertues so notable, ỳ they despised these vnsemely gaudes which ỳ skumme of all people haue in admiration; whose gouernment so politique, that riot and excesse was seuerely punished; yet let the commaundements of our God which are autentike; let the care of our soules that shall be iudged; let the threatnings of hym that detesteth hipocrisie, pompe and vanitie, so strike our hearties, that we tremble & shiner at the remembrãce of folly past, & gather vp our wittes vnto amending. Haue we sinned with the Gentiles in representinge of theire Playes: let vs learne with true Christians to abolish them, it is incident to euery man to fall, proper to the graceles to continue it, carry no saile against the winde, chaunge of course is a safe rhode vnto the penitent.

The

The Fourth Action.

It hath beene an auncient pollicie in ỳ field, to geue the enemis grownde, for some aduantage, and by counterfeyting a timerous kinde of flight, to droppe downe the cariage, as mony, prouision, and victuall by the way, that the Souldiers might stay theire pursute, and fall to rysling. Whereby both they that were chaied, haue recouered theim selues, and they that were conquerers haue lost all, suddenly discomfited with newe supplye among all the stumbling blockes that our enemy the deuill hath cast in our way for foylinge him vtterly.

It may easely be gathered by the end of Playes, that Comedies and Tragedies are the fittest deuises he could strew behind him, to stoppe vs of passage, and breake our order. Not that he meaneth to take his heeles, but to kill vs by subtiltie when we straggle.

What

What bringeth disorder more then sinne? that playes are set out for a sinfull delight, may be gathered partly, by Mænander, partly by Terence, partly by ỹ manner of pẽning in these dayes, partly by the object of playes. By Mænander because Viues affirmeth that he perceyuing the Macedons wholy giuen ouer to loue, and wantonnesse, wrote Commedies of loue, to feede their humor. By Terence because he confesseth of him selfe, that al that he sought was but to close with the common people. By the manner of penning in these dayes, because the Poets send theire verses to the Stage vpon such feete as continually are rowled vp in rime at the fingers endes, which is plaucible to the barbarous, and carrieth a stinge into the eares of the common people. By the obiect, because Tragedies and Commedies stirre vp affections, and affections are naturally planted in that part of the minde that is common to vs with brute beastes.

Comment. in August. lib. 2.

Prolog. in Andriam. Populo vt placerem: quas fecissem fabulas.

He that trauelleth to aduance the worst part of the minde, is like vnto

him, that in gouernement of Cities, giues all the authoritie to the worste men, which being well weighed, is to betraye the Citie, and the best men, into the handes of the wicked. But the Poetes that write playes, and they that present them vpon the Stage, studie to make our affections ouerflow, whereby they draw the bridle from that parte of the mind, that should euer be curbed, from runninge our heade: which is manifest treason to our soules, and deliuereth them captiue to the deuill.

The Author of the playe of playes, spreading out his battel to hemme me in, is driuen to take so large a cõpasse, that his array is the thinner, and therefore the easier, to be broken. He tyeth *Life* and Delight so fast together, that if Delight be restrained, *Life* presently perisheth; there, zeale perceyuing Delight to be embraced of *Life*, puttes a snaffle in his mouth, to keepe him vnder, Delight beinge bridled, Zeale leadeth life throughe a wildernesse of lothsomenesse, where

Obiection. *The substance of the playe of playes written in theire owne defence.*

Glutto

Glutte ſcarreth them all, chaſinge both Zeale and Delight from *Life*, and with the clubbe of amaſednesſe ſtrikes ſuch a pegge into the heads of *Life*, that he falles downe for dead vpon the Stage.

Life beinge thus fainte, and ouertrauailed, deſtitute of his guyde, robbed of Delight, is readie to giue vp the Ghoſt, in the ſame place, then entereth Recreation, which with muſicke and ſinging rockes *Life* a ſleepe to recouer his ſtrength.

By this meanes Tediouſneſſe is driuen from *Life*, and the temte is drawne out of his heade, which the clubbe of amaſednes left behinde.

At laſt Recreation ſetteth vp the Gentleman vpon his feete, Delight is reſtored to him againe, and ſuch kinde of ſportes for cullices are brought in to nouriſhe him, as none but Delight muſt applye to his ſtomache. Then time beinge made for the benefite

of Life, and Life being allowed to follow his appetite, amongst all manner of pastimes, Life chooseth Commedies, for his Delight, partly because Commedies are neither chargable to ỹ beholders purse, nor painful to his body; partly, because he may sit out of the raine to beiwe the same, when many other pastimes are hindred by wether. Zeale is no more admitted to Life before he be somewhat pincht in the waste, to auoyde extremitie, and being not in the end simply called Zeale but Moderate Zeale a fewe conditions are prescribed to Commedies, that the matter be purged, deformities blazed, sinne rebuked, honest mirth intermingled, and fitte time for the hearing of the same appointed, Moderate Zeale is cõtented to suffer them, who ioyneth with delight to direct life againe, after which he triũphes ouer Death & is crowned with eternitie. These bugges are fitter to feare babes thẽ to moue men. Neuertheles this is the substance of that which is brought for plaies, this is the piller of theire credit. Al other men ỹ subscribe not

not this but inueigh against them, by writing in bookes; or by tongue in Pulpits; do but crow as he tearmeth it, and speake against Commedies for lacke of learning S. Siprian, S. Chrisostome, S. Ambrose, S. Augustine, Isodorus, Tertullian fathers of the Church most excellently learned, cõsels as the third of Carthage the Synod of Laodicea, and such like, that condemned plaies, and ỹ skilfullst Deuines at this day in England which are compelled in Sermons to crye out against them, were now to be set to ỹ schole againe, if the mouth of this plaimaker, were any iust measure of their knowledge. Sithince al their force cõ- Answere
sisteth in this pointe of *Life & Delight* I wil take ỹ more paine to ouerthrow it, and so conquere ỹ rest without schirmish, like to ỹ Romanes who meeting the whole power of Carthage vpon ỹ sea, & foyling it ther, thought it superfluous to proceed any further, or bring the Ramme to the walles, when Carthage was drowned in ỹ deepe. And as the Romans thought ỹ after Carthage was ouercome, no coũtry was

ashamed to be subdued. So I trust ȳ when I haue beaten theire captaine to the earth, by force of argumēt, none of them all wil disdaine to be taken, or to crie out with testimony of good conscience, greate is the truethy, & it doth preuaile. Though it please not him to distinguish betwene delight, & delight, yet for the better vnderstanding both of that which is spoken in defence of plaies, and of that which by me shalbe brought against them, you must consider ȳ there are two sortes of delight, the one belonging to ȳ bodie, the other to the minde, that is carnall, this spirituall. Carnall delight is the rest of sensuall appetite in the thing desired whē it is felt. If this be not gouerned by ȳ rule of Gods word, we are presently carried beyond our selues, therefore ought we to followe the counsell of S. Paule, which exhorteth vs earnestly to suppresse the same. Spiritual delight is the operation of vertue consisting in a meditation of the life to come purchased to vs by the blode of Christ, & reueiled for our comforte in the word of God. A notable blessinge is pronoun-

Aqui. par. 1. Q. 31. Art. 5.

Colos. 3. 5.

pronounced on him whose delight is in the lawe of the Lord, and the Propher him selfe voweth solemnely to God, that he wil talke of his commandements, walke in his wayes, and delight in his statutes. By the whole discourse it may be gathered, that the delight belonging to the bodie, is it, which this gentlemã requireth as physicke against the troubles and vexations of this life, which bewrayeth him to be souncke in that errour, that Aristotle reproueth in his Ethickes. For if the delight of this life, be to be sought as a remedie against the sorrous of the same, excesse of delight must be graunted to excesse of sorowe, as excesse of thirst, requireth excesse of drinke, excesse of hunger, excesse of meate; excesse of griefe, excesse of pleasure: but excesse of delight in this life is not to be sought, for feare of surfette; therefore to cure the anguishe of this life with such kinde of pleasures as life pursues, is to measure the remedie by the owne appetite, which in deed is nothing els, but either to rece ue

Psal 1.

Psal. 119.

Lib. 7. Cap. 14.

that, that our sickestomacke desireth, when it cannot iudge; as to eat chalke in the greene sicknes; in an ague pilchers; or as they that in some kinde of leprosie drinke poyson, which is altogether hurtful to good complexions, yet worketh it accidentally some ease in them. Being once shipped in this part of Philosophie he is carried too farre beyond his skill.

For in making sorowe an enemie to delight without distinctiõ, it is easy, to finde where the shoe wringes him, and that want of learning which he imputeth to other, may very well be attributed to himselfe.

I graunt that sorowe and delight are contrarie, yet may a contrarie sometimes be the cause of his contrarie. As Rheubart, which all the Phisitians confesse to be hote, yet doe they finde it to cole in the hottest feuers, when it sweepes away choler, that causeth heate.

Anat. phisic. Though contraries of theire owne nature be vtter enemies, yet accidentally the one may begete the other, so delight many times may spring,

of

of ſorrowe, which is to be take̅ two diuers waies as it is in act, or as it is remēbred: ſorrow as it is in acte, may bring forth delight, whē it makes vs to thinke of the thinge we loue, ſuch was the delight of the Apoſtles when they were whipte, they departed from the Counſell with greate ioye, to ſee thē ſelues accounted worthy to ſuffer for the name of Chriſte. Aqui part. Theolog. 1.q.32. art.4. Act.5.4.

Sorrowe as it is remembred when it is paſte, conſidering with our ſelues that wee were in trouble and eſcaped it, is alſo a cauſe of delight, ſo Æneas comforteth his ſouldiers in the middeſt of their ſorrowes, putting them in minde, that the remembrance thereof, woulde turne to delight another daye. Therfore vnder colour of an abſolute conflict betweene ſorrow & delight, to ſhake off the yoake of ſeuerer diſcipline which zeale bringeth in to gouerne life, is to iuggle vnder boarde, *a ſecundum quid ad ſimpliciter*, which Logicians doe knowe is ſo greate a faulte in diſputing, as deſerues to bee punished in their youngeſt ſcholers. By forcing vpon life a certaine neceſſity of carnall Virg.

delight,

delyght, to set vp his Comedies, hee wrappeth himselfe in many inconueniences. For it hindreth the course of reason, it whets vs to wantonnes, it nourisheth imperfections, and argueth a corruption in our maners, it hindreth the vse of reason three sundry wayes: First, it withdrawes the minde from better studies, the minde like a stringe, being let downe, and pitcht, beneath his naturall compasse, to this key of carnall delight, which wee reape by Comedies, is very sore maymed and robbed of Soueraunetie if delight bee greate. Next by reason of a contrariety when it exceedes, thus Aristotle drawing out a streight line of the office of prudence, maketh it consist in giuing good counsell, to liue well; in which place hee counteth temperance, the Nurse; exceeding delight, y corrupter of prudence. But Comedyes make our delight exceede, for at the many times wee laugh so extreemely, that striuing to bridle our selues, wee cannot; therfore Plato affirmeth y great laughter breedeth a great change, & y old prouerbe peraduenture rose of thus, much laughter is y cognisãce of a fole; where

Aqu. part. 1. qu. 14.

th. 6. cap. 5.

de Rep.

such excesse of laughter burſteth out y we cannot holde it, thers is no temperance, for the time; where no tẽperãce is, ther is no wiseome, nor vse of reaſõ; when we shew our selues voide both of reason, and wisedome, what are we then to be thought but fooles?

Last of all it is a blocke in the way of reason, because it locketh vp ỹ powres of the minde from doing their practise, & like a kinde of drunkennes, maketh vs stagger, very vnfit, either to speake; or to walke as we shoulde in our vocation. It whets vs to wantõnes: because it breedeth a hunger, & thirst, after pleasure. For whẽ the thing which our appetite enioyeth cãnot bee receiued all at once, but by succession, or change, we gape after more, as hee ỹ hearing one halfe of a sentence, & delighteth in that, is very desirous to haue the rest. So in Comedies delight beeing moued with varieties of shewes, of euentes, of musicke, the longer we gaze, the more we crane, yea so forcible they are, ỹ afterwards being but thought vpõ, they make vs seeke for the like an other time. It nourisheth imperfections,

so

so long as it settes our heartes vpon thinges that are transitorie, vaine and shall perish in the twinckling of an eye, it argueth a corruption in our manners, because it is the windowe by which we looke into the secret corners of the soule, it is the very line, and lead, whereby our disposition is measured to bee roughe or smoth, streight or crooked, lawefull or vnlawfull, right or wrong. How shall wee knowe a man to be good, or euill, but by the goodnes or naughtines of his will? His will appeareth by the ende thereof, that is counted the end wherein it resteth, and the rest of our will, is the delight that wee reape in the thing we holde to be good.

Thus we pronounce all them to bee vertuous, whome we see to delight in the workes of vertue; them to be wicked, whome we finde to reioyce in the works of wickednes. For as that is euill which rebelleth against reason and the lawes of God, so is that delight to be iudged euil that is fired in the same, and the man likewise euill that so delighteth. Therfore I may well say the de-

ight

light which springeth of Comedies (wherby superiority is giuen to affections and so rebellion rayled against reason, the lawes of God are broke which bid vs come out and departe from the doctrine of the Diuell) so marketh the corruption of our maners in our forheadds, that euery one that hath iudgmente may poynte it out.

But to leaue ouer curiously to descant vpon this plaine songe of life and delight, either by Aquinas, or by Aristotle or by Philosophie her self. I erhorte you wt Paule to beware lest any man spoyle you through Philosophy, and vaine deceite, after the traditions of men, and after the rudiments of the worlde, and not after Christ. And ffthince we are commanded by the same Apostle, as we haue receiued Christ, so to walke in him, let vs bring the triall of our cause to the touch of Gods worde, and examine by that, what the life and delight of a Christian ought to be, then shall you see my generall proposition verie strongly confirmed, that Plaies are not to bee suffered in a Christian commonweale. Paule commandeth Collos. 2.

Cap.4.ver.4. maundeth the Phillippians to reioyce in the Lord, not for a day nor a weeke, nor a moneth, nor a yeare, but euer: the reason is added, that their modesty might bee knowne, and why should their modesty be knowne? because the Lorde is at hand: by which Particle the delight of this life is beate downe. Christe giuing vs to vnderstand the danger of these delights wherein wee laugh with the worlde, pronounceth a woe vpon them, Wo bee to you that laugh nowe, for ye shall weepe and lament.

Luk.6.25.

It behoueth a Christian so to delight, and reioyce nowe, that he maye reioyce & delight at the last daye, which ioye is accomplished by this that wee are partakers of the crosse of Christe. Howe farre this delight is different from Comedies, is easie to bee seene with halfe an eye, and if Poets haue no surer gyrthes to their saddle thē life and delight, it will be no trouble to vnhorse them, for a Christian knoweth how to delight in death. Large is the groūd I might trauace in this behalfe, yet for breuities sake I will passe it ouer,

1.Pet.4.13.

Tertul.de Spec

uer, and shewe you the life of a Christian as I promised

We are taught by Paule that Christ is our life, and that our life is layde vpp with Christe in God: therefore by the way of comparison as Christ died, and after ascended vp to heauen, so he persuadeth vs to dye, that is to mortifie this flesh with the delights thereof, and to seeke after those thinges that are aboue, where Christ our life is. The end of the death of Christ was, that we which liue in this worlde, should not liue to our selues, but vnto him; heere is all prerogatiue taken from vs, wee are nowe no longer our owne men, for if by the benefite of him wee liue, our life must be his and not our own. Our life is not his, excepte wee crucifie the flesh, with the affections and concupiscences of the same, wee crucifie not the affections of our flesh, when we resorte vnto playes to stirre them vpp, therefore running to playes wee liue to our selues, and not to Christe, when we liue to our selues, it is no life. Colloss. 3. 2. Cor. 5. 15.

Yet the Authour of the Playe of Playes and Pastimes thinkes hee hath

hath plowed such furrowes on my backe, as will neuer bee filled vp againe, because Comedis nourish delight, and delight should neuer be taken frō life.

This argument cuts like a Ledenhaule knife where (as they say in common speach) if one poure on steele with a ladell, an other comes and wipes it of with a fether. Neuertheless heere it maye bee that my friendes of the vniuersityes will accuse me of that aulleryty, which was vsed by some of the Godly long agoe, who perceiuing men in all thinges naturally to passe the bounds of modesty, and beeing desirous to lay some strong kinde of playster to this olde soare, allowed men to vse the blessinges of God, but for necessities sake, prescribing them nothing, but that whiche was necessarie: thus were they inioyned to abstain frō al maner of things, that might be spared. Which in deede is a harder yoake then the worde of God doth lay vpon vs: For after this rate, we should haue no more then one coate to our backes, nor the vse of many

Obiect.

Lasch.

ny creatures which God hath ordeined for the seruice of man. Many thinges there are that the handes of God hath bestowed vpon vs not onely for necessitie, but for delight, as apparell, meates, flowers, metalles, and such like.

Apparell as well for comelines, as to keepe off the iniury of the ayre. Meats, aswell for delight, as for nutriment; otherwise had the prophet neuer reckoned it vp amonge the benefits of God, that hee giueth vs wine to make our heartes glad, and oyle to make vs a chearefull countenance. The singuler beautie and swestenes of flowers, the varietie of colours wherein one thing excelles another, had beene bestowed in vayne, if the Maiesty of God had not as well regarded our delight, as relieued our neede. This I take to bee the foundation wherupon the Authour of the Play of Playes buildeth his strongest reason, which is this, because wee haue eares to heare, eyes to see, and so forth, Comedies presenting delight to both, are not so rashly to bee condemned. To whome I answere, that the Psal. 104. 16. Answere

creatures of God may be vsed both for necessity, and for delight, so farre forth as they are referred to that ende, for which they were made.

God hath bestowed apparell, foode, flowers, Treasure, as golde, siluer, pearle, bewetifull and rich stones, as Diamoundes, Saphires, Rubies, Carbuncles, Turkies, Chrysolites; beesides them, Yuorie, Iett, and marble. of these blessings some are both necessary and delightsome, some are only delightsome; nothing necessary: but to what ende? That we might vse thē well, & by these trāsitorie benefits be led as it were by ỹ hand, to a cōsideratiō of those benefits that are layde vp for vs in the life to come. We are placed as Pilgrimes in ỹ flesh by which as by a iorney we must come to our owne home, therefor passing by the earth, and by the flesh it is our duety (as trauelers) to be carefull to vse the earth, and the flesh. and ỹe blessings of both, so, that they may further, not hinder the course we take in hande.

Cor. 8.

Cor. 9

Whereupon Paule exhorteth vs to vse this worlde, as though wee

vsed

vsed it not, by which counsell of his, all affections, all thoughtes, all delights, that may clappe any leade to our heeles, or drawe vs aside when wee shoulde runne forwardes still, vntill wee bee crowned, are cutte away. How are we thankefull to God, how lift we vp our mindes to meditate on the life to come, howe vse we these blessings, as helpes in the way we haue to trace, whē they are riottously wasted vpon Comedies, which drawe vs all backe to a sinfull delight? howe vse wee the worlde as though wee vsed it not, when our studies are so fixed vpon the worlde? how mightely Playes pull vs backe from our trauell, hath beene already declared by many strong reasons drawen from the foure causes of the same, therfore to holde them tollerable because they delight, is a reason altogether rude, and mishapen, hauing neither head, to bring it in, nor soote, to beare it vp. But as many which showting vp lustely in their youth, bewrate the greenenesse of their yeeres, by the rawenesse of their manners, and of the wiser sorte, are counted for boyes

though they looke like mē: so I trust ỹ all that haue iudgemēt will measure ỹ reasons of life, & delight, rather by the substance, that is within; then by the outward shew howsoeuer they mout, or brag it out.

Enter euery one into your selues, and whensoeuer you heare that playe a gaine, or any man els in priuate conference commend Playes, consider not, so much what is spoken to colour them, as what may bee spoken to confounde them. It is shame, to frequent playes, impudency to defende them; it is dangerous to fall in the enemies hande, present death to be prysoners to the Diuell; it is sinne in the Gentiles to set out Playes, in Christians it is a presumptuous sinne, because (we see better wayes and take the worse, we knowe their corruption, and allowe them. All this hath beene sufficiently proued by ancient writers, and dayly reuealed by learned Preachers, yet will not my countrymē leaue their Playes, because Playes are the nourishers of delight; wherein I perceiue they are like to the snake, out of their head, they whiske with the tayle.

The 5 Action.

I Thinke you maru. ile why ſo many famous men in both vniuerſities, haue made open outcries of the inconueniences bredde by playes, none of thē by printing haue taken the paines to write any full diſcouery againſt thē, I eſpecially, which neither in age, wiſedme, nor authority may be compared to them, with leſſe learning, and more preſumption, haue taken the charge vpon my ſelfe. They hold this opiniō ỹ playes are not to be ſuffred in a Chriſtian commonweale, but they do not throughly proſecute the ſame, becauſe that finding the eares of their hearers ſtopte with the deafe adder, they beginne to ſhake the duſt frō their ſhoes againſt them, and followe the coūſell of God him ſelfe, which biddeth them throwe no pearles to ſwine. The thing they condeme, becauſe it is euill; they beginne to bee mute becauſe men are obſtinate in opinions.

What then? am I the boldeſt in all thy cõpany? no. Am I more zealous thẽ ỹ reſt? God forbid I ſhould rob any, of thoſe titles of vertue ỹ they poſſeſſe, or challẽge ỹ to my ſelfe, which is due to them. What is the reaſon thẽ ỹ I dare ſet in my foote before the reſt? Becauſe that if any of thẽ ſhoulde write againſte playes, that occupy your pulpits with learned ſermons, whoſe knowledge & authority heerein is great. If I ſay, they ſhoulde ſpeake but one worde againſtỹ ſlepines of Magiſtrats which in this caſe is neceſſary to bee touchte, they ſhall ſeeme ſtreight to ſwerue from the texte, to ſpeake without booke, and to vtter a great deale more then needs. But I, though my ſpeach bee ſomewhat more free then theirs, ſhalbe excuſed for wante of iudgement, ſith I am rawe; or for childiſh aſpiring, ſith I am yonge. Beſide this, hauing once already writtẽ againſt playes, which no mã that euer wrote plaies, did, but one, who hath chãged his coppy, and turned himſelf like ỹ dog to his vomite, to plays againe. And being falſly accuſed my ſelfe to do ỹ like, it is needfull for me to write

againe.

againe. These things wͤ indifferẽcy cõsideres, will persuade the reasonable, ẏ I haue takẽ this enterprise vpõ me, not only without any malepart ouerhardines, but of necessity, because my experience hath taught as much as any, and made me able to say little lesse thẽ any. Therfore as I haue already discouered ẏ corruptiõ of playes by ẏ corruptiõ of their causes, The Efficiẽt, the Matter, the Forme, the end, so will I cõclude ẏ Effects ẏ this poyson works amõg vs. The diuel is not ignorãt how mightely these outward spectacles effeminate, & softẽ ẏ hearts of mẽ, vice is learned wͤ beholding, sẽse is tickled, desire pricked, & those impressions of mind are secretly cõueyed ouer to ẏ gazers, which ẏ plaiers do coũterfeit on ẏ stage. As long as we know our selues to be flesh, beholding those exãples in Theaters ẏ are incidẽt to flesh, wee are taught by other mẽs exãples how to fall. And they that came honest to a play, may depart infected. Lactãtius douteth whether any corruptiõ can be greater, thẽ ẏ which is daily bred by plaies, because ẏ expressing of vice by imitation, brings vs by the

 Lib. 6. cap.

shadow, to the substance of the same. Whereupon hee affirmeth them necessary to bee banished, least wickednes be learned, or with the custome of pleasure, by little and little we forget God. What force there is in the gestures of Players, may bee gathered by the Tale of Bacchus, and Ariadne, whiche Xenophon reporteth to bee Played at a banquette, by a Syracusian and his boy, and his dauncing Trull. In came the Syracusian not vnlike to Prologue of our Playes, discoursing the argumente of the fable, then entred Ariadne, gorgeously attyred like a Bride, and sate in the presence of them all, after came Bacchus dauncing to the Pipe, Ariadne perceiuing him, though shee neither rose to meete him, nor sturred from the place to welcome him, yet she shewed by her gesture that shee sate vpon thornes.

When Bacchus beheld her, expressing in his daunce the passions of loue, he placed him selfe somewhat neere to her, and embraced her, she with an amorous kind of feare and strangenes, as though shee woulde thrust him

away with the litle finger, and pull him againe with both her handes, somewhat timorously, and doubtfully entertained him.

At this the beholders beganne to shoute, when Bacchus rose vp, tenderly lifting Ariadne from her seate, no small store of curtesie passing betweene them, the beholders rose vp, euery man stoode on tippe toe, and seemed to houer ouer the playe, when they sware, the company sware, when they departed to bedde; the company presently was set on fire, they that were married posted home to theire wiues; they that were single, vowed very solemly, to be wedded.

As the stinge of Phalangion spreadeth her poyson through euery vaine, when no hurt is seene; so amorous gesture, strikes to the heart when no skinne is raced. Therefore Cupid is painted with bowe and arrowes, because it is the propertie of lust to wound alwaies. Which being welll weighed, Sainte Cyprian had verie good cause to complaine, that players are spots to our manners, nourishers of vice, and corrupters Epist. lib. 2. ep. 2. ad Donat.

rupters of al things by their gestures. The godly Father knowing the practise of playing to be so euil, and the inconueniences so monstrous that grew thereby, thinkes the maiestie of God to be stayned, ẏ honour of his Church defaced, when players are admitted to the table of the Lord. Neither was this the opinion of Saint Cyprian alone, but of the whole assembly of learned fathers in the councell held vnder Constantius the emperor.

Spist: lib: 1. ep. 10 ad Euerantium.

Concil: Arelatens: 1. 20.

Greate is the hardnes of our hartes when, neither fathers, nor councels, nor God himselfe strikes vs with any shame of that, which euery good man is ashamed to remember. Mine eyes throughly behold the manner of Theaters, when I wrote playes my selfe, & found them to be the very markets of bawdry, where choise wont shame hath bene as free, as it is for your money in the royall exchaung, to take a short stocke, or a longe, a falling bād, or a french ruffe. The first building of Theaters was to rauish the Sabines, and ẏ they were continued in whordome euer after, Ouide confesseth

telleth in these wordes.

Scilicet ex illo solẽnia more Theatra
nũc quoq; formosis insidiosa manẽt Art. amand.

As at the first, so nowe, Theaters are snares vnto faire women. And as I tould you long agoe in my schoole of abuse, our Theaters, & play houses in London, are as full of secrete adulterie as they were in Rome. In Rome it was the fashion of wanton young men, to place them selues as nigh as they could to the curtesans, to present them pomgranates, to play with their garments, and waite on them home. when the sport was done. In the playhouses at London, it is the fashion of youthes to go first into the parde, and to carry their eye through euery gallery, thẽ like vnto rauens when they spye the carion thither they flye, and preese as nere to ỹ fairest as they can. In stead of põgranates they giue thẽ peppines, they dally wỉ their garments to passe ỹ time, they minister talke vpõ al occasions, & eyther bring thẽ home to theire houses on small acquaintãce, or slip into tauerns wherẽ ỹ places are dõe.

He thinketh best of his painted sheath.

and

& taketh himselfe for a iolly fellow, y is noted of most, to be busyest w̄ women in all such places. This open corruption is a pricke in the eyes of them that see it, and a thorne in the sides of the godly, when they heare it. This is a poyson to beholders, and a nurseris of idelnesse to the Players.

Most of the Players haue bene eyther men of occupations, which they haue forsaken to lyue by playing, or common minstrels, or trayned vp from theire childehode to this abhominable exercise & haue now no other way to gete theire liuinge. A common weale is likened to the body, whose heade is the prince, in the bodie: if any part be idle, by participation the damage redoundeth to the whole, if any refuse to doe theire duetie, though they be base, as the guttes, the gall, the bladder, howe daungerous it is both to the bodie, and to the heade, euerie man is able to coniecture.

We are commaunded by God to abide in the same calling wherein we were called, which is our ordinary vocation in a commonweale. This

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is the ſtanding, which as faithfull ſouldiers we ought to kepe, till the Lord himſelfe do call vs from it. Be we neuer ſo baſe or meane in the ſight of men, yet keeping our ſtanding, liuing in our vocation, doing our duetie, we haue this comforte, that God is our captaine, God is our guide, it is giuen vs of God, yeelding our ſelues obedient to him, we can not but gliſter in his ſight.

If we grudge at the wiſedome of our maker, and diſdaine the callings he hath placed vs in, aſpyring ſomewhat higher then we ſhoulde, as in the body; when the feete woulde bee armes, the armes would be eyes; the guttes would be veines, the veines would be nerues; the muſcles would be fleſh, the fleſh would be ſpirit, this confuſion of order weakens the head: So in a commonweale, if priuat men be ſuffered to forſake theire calling becauſe they deſire to walke gentleman like in ſattine & veluet, wt a buckler at theire heeles, proportion is ſo broken, vnitie diſſolued, harmony confoũded, & the whole body muſt be diſmembred

and

and the prince or the heade can not chuse but sicken. Wherefore I hope ỹ wise will accompt it necessarie, that such as haue lefte theire occupations, eyther be turned to the same againe, or cut of from the body as putrified mẽbers for infecting the rest. Let them that haue no occupation at all, aske God forgiuenes for the time so euill spent, and apply them selues spedely to liue within the compasse of a common weale. Let them not looke to liue by playes, the litle thrift that followeth theire greate gaine, is a manifest token that God hath cursed it, that which is gotten ouer the deuils backe, is, spet vnder his belly, it comes running, and departes flying with the wings of an Egle in the aire. I haue showed you louing countrymen ỹ corruptiõ & inconueniences of your playes, as the tendernes of my learnings would affoorde, being pulde from ỹ vniuersitie before I was ripe, & withered in ỹ countrie for want of sappe: if you prefer ỹ opinion of Lodge or any such like before ỹ infallable testimony of your owne senses, if I which for the

loue

loue I beare to your soules, & the duetie that I owe vnto my God, haue plainly declared what I reade by study, or finde by practise, concerning plaies, not as a picte Orator that with greatest skill; but as a welwiller, ẏ wͤ smallest ieoperdie might speake my mind; If your preachers whose learning is wonderful; zeale, vnspeakable; if ẏ auncient fathers of ẏ church, which haue lookte very narrowly into the cause, & in anguish of heart set downe theire iudgement; if the counsels of fathers which are not the Oracles of any one man but debated substantially by the heades of many, if the word of God, which is the finger ẏ pointes you out the way, which is the trumpete ẏ giueth ẏ surest soūd, which is ẏ square, vnto which you must be fashioned, which is the written voyce of the God of Israell challenginge credit of it selfe, may not perswade you to leaue your plaies, the succese of my labour wil be leane, & ẏ hope of your amēdment sterned to death: but if you be such as I take you for, glad to be taught, vnwilling to perish, louers of the Gospel,

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haters of libertie, champions in earth for the right of Christ, callégers to the deuill and all his workes, no spirit of slepe shall muffle your eyes, no fat of selfe will, or ignorance shall couer your heartes, no parasite shall flatter you, in your sinne, no *Lodge*, no playmaker, no Epicure, no Atheiste, shall make you to surfette with these delightes.

Playes are the inuentions of the deuil, the offrings of Idolatrie, the pompe of worldlinges, the blossomes of vanitie, the rote of Apostacy, the foode of iniquitie, ryot, and adulterie. detest them.

Players are maisters of vice, teachers of wantonnesse, spurres to impuritie, the Sonnes of idlenesse, so longe as they liue in this order, loath them. God is mercifull, his winges are spred to receyue you if you come betimes, God is iust, his bow is bent & his arrowe drawen, to slea you a plague, if you staye too longe.

FINIS.

Gosson ridiculed on the stage for
See last page of Address
to the Reader. —
— "Wilie Beguile" Sign: B. 8. compare
with title of play called "Wily
Beguiled" —

Monopolist lives brought upon
the stage — Sig. C. 12 — D. 1. —
Thus called the [illegible]
[illegible]
Ladges Play of Plays was exhibited
the stage on the 23 February 1581 - 2 date
See Sig. D 3.